Memorials of an Eighteenth Century Painter James Northcote

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MEMORIALS OF AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PAINTER (JAMES NORTHCOTE)

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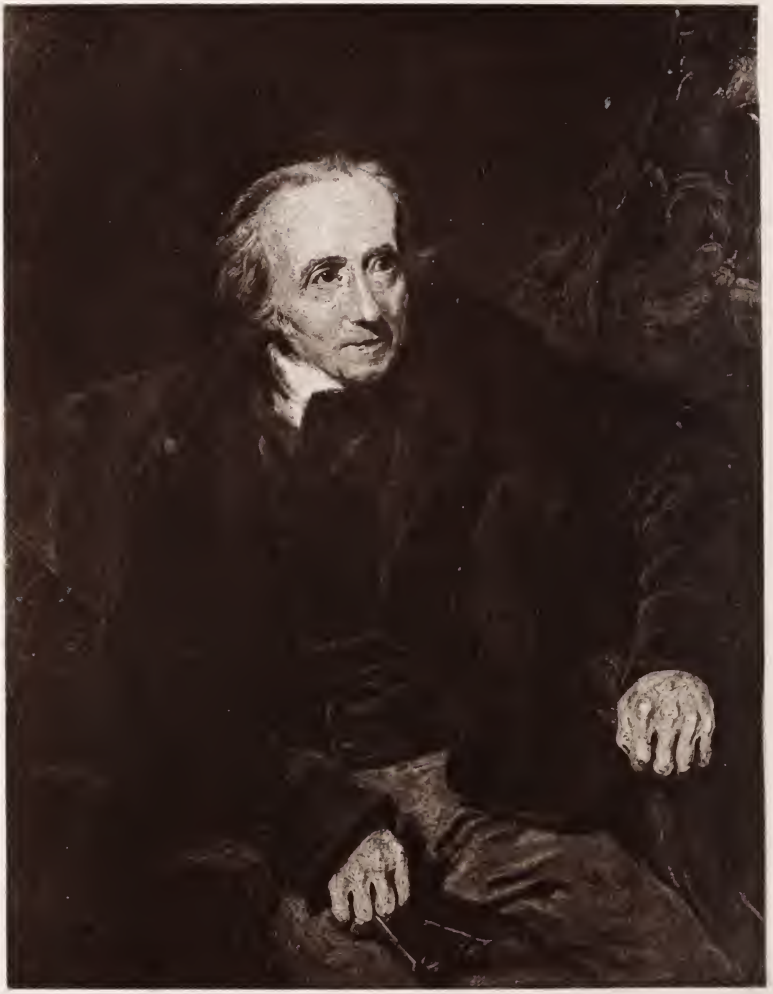

James Northcote.

MEMORIALS OF AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PAINTER

(James Northcote)

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By Stephen Gwynn

Illustrated

London
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1898

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INTRODUCTION

JAMES NORTHCOTE is one of the most notable links between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Born early in the reign of George II., he lived to paint the portrait of John Ruskin; he exhibited with Reynolds and he exhibited with Turner; he heard Johnson talk to Goldsmith and Garrick speak his mind of Coleman; and many of these recollections of his youth, recited fifty years later by the veteran, whose mind had lost nothing of its freshness and whose tongue nothing of its Devon twang, were set down from his lips by Hazlitt, no inconspicuous member of a circle not less distinguished than Sir Joshua's. Northcote is remembered more for the sake of others than for himself; yet it will, I hope, be possible to show that he was at the very least an interesting figure. His merits as an artist, though not remarkable, have probably been underrated; and his almost pathetic devotion to the art, which he followed like a desperate lover, deserved

a better recompense. But his excellence as a gossip was never disputed; and the object of this book is to gather up and complete the record of his personal recollections. The basis of the volume is a hitherto unpublished autobiography of Northcote's, which has been edited with retrenchments and additions; but before explaining the circumstances relative to this memoir it is necessary to outline his career.

James Northcote was born at Plymouth on October 22, 1746, the son of a watchmaker; received a very scanty education, and was kept at his father's trade till, at the age of twenty-five, he managed to break away to London, and there, after a brief period, was admitted into the household of Sir Joshua Reynolds as an apprentice and drapery painter. He lived with Reynolds for five years, then set up for himself as a portrait painter, and in a couple of years amassed enough money to allow himself two years in Italy, whence he returned in 1780 and established himself in London. The difficulty in obtaining commissions made him take to history painting, and he established his reputation in that branch of the art. His life was prolonged to an exceptional limit with unimpaired faculties. He died on July 13, 1831, at the age of eighty-five, having lived for half a century almost exclusively in his painting-room.

His active mind sought an outlet in literature as

well as on canvas. In 1807 he began to contribute occasionally to periodicals, and in 1809 he wrote a short memoir of Sir Joshua for Britton's "Fine Arts of the British School." In 1813 appeared the Life of his old master, which, with all its defects, remains admittedly the prime source of our knowledge about Reynolds. The quarto was entitled "Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt. . . . comprising Original Anecdotes of many distinguished persons; his contemporaries, and a brief Analysis of his Discourses. To which are added Varieties on Art." The "Varieties on Art," omitted in the second edition, were simply reprints of Northcote's contributions to the *Artist:* "The Dream of a Painter," "Letters of a Disappointed Genius," "The Slighted Beauty" (an allegorical satire on the progress of art), and so forth. The volume was, in short, not merely a Life of Reynolds, but a hotchpotch of Northcote's views and reminiscences; and though it shows abundant marks of that shrewd, critical judgment which always distinguished him and charmed so fastidious a listener as Hazlitt, yet there is apparent everywhere the incompetence of an amateur in letters. It is just such a book as one would have expected from such a man; but rumours have been frequent — the assertion is made positively in Prior's Life of Goldsmith—that Northcote signed a volume which some one else

wrote. That is absolutely untrue ; a certain Mr. Laird was employed—as Northcote told Hazlitt, and as Hazlitt reported in print—to see the book through the press ; but a considerable part of the whole exists in Northcote's own handwriting, though not as a Life of Sir Joshua. It is this manuscript which, by the kindness of its present owner, I have edited in this book.

Northcote, as I take it, found the itch of writing increase upon him, and, being fully aware that the period of his early manhood, in which the Royal Academy was founded and organised, had been an epoch of great importance in the history of British art, he determined, in the first place, to preserve an accurate record of it. Secondly, as the sole surviving member of Sir Joshua's personal circle, he found himself the repository of much anecdote which was sought after with increasing eagerness, and this also he proposed to set down in permanent form. Thirdly, he experienced the natural and almost universal desire to perpetrate an auto-biography, and this seemed to him at first the obvious method of utilising the stores of his memory. He set to work, therefore, about 1810 in all probability, to write a memoir of himself ; but he did so in a curiously shamefaced way. In the fore-front of the book he put an expression of his abstract zeal as a historian of art for the cause of truth.

"The strong probability that another age may require a history of the Royal Academy of Arts in London and its earliest members has been my chief inducement towards collecting the following circumstances, thus to prevent some future busy compiler of such a work from going wrong in this instance at least, who perhaps might, in want of proper information, choose to invent when his materials were insufficient, or, prompted by misinformed, officious persons, give a fabricated story, to the injury of truth and the prejudice of good fame; and when the honour and interest of truth are concerned it certainly behoves us to employ all lawful means in its defence and support. It is therefore desirable that every memoir of this species should have been collected during the lifetime of the person recorded, and in some degree under his own inspection, if possible."

Further, in addition to this profession of an impersonal object, he adopted a method of narration in the third person. The memoir begins, "James Northcote, whose life I am to write;" and all through it is "James" did this, "James," or very often, "Poor James," suffered that, with occasional lapses into "I" and "my." At some later period he went through the manuscript with a pencil and altered for part of the way to the first person—a procedure which in editing him I have followed out. The

memoir was written in a small quarto notebook, which he illustrated by pasting in sketches of his own or prints of the persons to whom he referred. The narrative describes very fully the circumstances of his leaving home; then follows a sketch of his life at Sir Joshua's, and a long collection of anecdotes of the famous circle. From that he passes to his Italian tour, which is very fully given; then comes a very complete account of his difficulties when he returned home and set up for himself; and at this point, no doubt for want of definite incidents, the narrative ceases to be continuous. The last thing in the memoir written with any elaboration is the notice of Sir Joshua's death and a complete estimate of his work and character. Here, if I mistake not, a new idea suggested itself to the author. All the material, except that relating directly to himself, might be used with greater fitness in a Life of Reynolds; and there could be no doubt that a memoir of the great man was likely to attract incomparably more notice than a volume of personal reminiscences by a not too well-known painter. Accordingly Northcote turned his pen, and set to work on the new undertaking, incorporating into it all the anecdotes which he had already put into shape, and extending and modifying a good deal his criticism of Reynolds. The early life of Sir Joshua is, of course, not related in

the manuscript, nor are the details as to the foundation of the Academy. But from 1770 onwards there is very little in Northcote's published work which he had not already treated in the autobiography.

The history of the little notebook which I have edited can be completely written. Northcote, after abandoning his scheme of publishing its contents, preserved it, and used it as a sort of commonplace book in which he jotted down stray notes of anything which seemed to him exceptionally interesting ; such as his passage of arms with the Duke of Clarence (given at p. 248), or the episode of his encounter with a highway robber. He preserved in it also several lengthy and admirable letters from his brother Samuel, detailing events of note—mostly nautical—from Plymouth ; and in his old age he stored up in it the fine flower of his press notices (which it would have been too cruel an irony to reproduce after this lapse of time). Finally he wrote down in it the long catalogue of his multifarious pictures which I print at the end of this book, as likely to have a value for connoisseurs in quest of information.

This treasured volume was confided by the old man in the last year of his life to Sir William Knighton, whom he asked to edit it. This, however, was not done ; but Knighton lent the volume

to Leslie when the latter was engaged upon his Life of Sir Joshua, as Tom Taylor, who published the work, records in his preface. At the sale of Sir William Knighton's library it was bought by a dealer, and found in his shop by my friend Mr. E. W. Hennell, whose good fortune in collecting things of beauty and interest is equal to his judgment and taste. It is by his permission that I have edited it for publication.

The early part of Northcote's life and the circumstances of his joining Reynolds were stated with considerable fulness in a memoir prefixed to the posthumous series of his "Fables" by Edward Southey Rogers (their editor), who had access to a considerable number of Northcote's letters to his relations in Plymouth. Taylor and Leslie gave an account of the same period, condensed from Northcote's own manuscript memoir. The episode of his Italian tour, related at such length by him in this autobiography, is entirely new, and gives a vivid picture of what was then an almost indispensable stage in the training of every artist. But except this section of the book there is nothing absolutely fresh in what is now published, though nothing is given which seems to me likely to be widely familiar. Few artists have been so much written about, and a mere summary of the literature which clusters round Northcote's name will show that

most of the ground must be well worn. To begin with, a great part of his material had been utilised in the Life of Reynolds, including even one or two anecdotes of himself. After his death there was published an extensive notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1831. Allen Cunningham, then at work on the Lives of the British Painters, gave him an intelligent and well-informed biography. E. S. Rogers wrote in 1833 the memoir prefixed to the second series of "Fables," which was not published till 1845; and the writings of contemporary artists abound with references to the odd old figure. But the circumstance to which Northcote owed his sort of secondhand immortality was his intimacy with William Hazlitt. The pair met in 1802; Northcote, then close on sixty, was nearly forty years Hazlitt's senior, but the friendship or acquaintance lasted till Hazlitt's death in 1830. Hazlitt had sketched Northcote more than once in print before 1826, when he began to issue in the *New Monthly Magazine*—signing himself "Boswell Redivivus"—those conversations with Northcote which were published as a book in 1830, and reissued in 1894 under the editorship of Mr. Edmund Gosse. It will be seen that Northcote's reminiscences are not precisely virgin soil. There are stories in this book which figured first in the Life of Sir Joshua, and afterwards in a more brilliant form among Hazlitt's

pages. But I have preferred to include them, even so ; my object being to publish Northcote's memoir of himself with such explanations and additions as the lapse of time has rendered desirable for the average reader, and with such retrenchments as human intolerance of moralising and other considerations dictated.

The memoir, however, requires to be supplemented. It gives us an excellent picture of the enthusiastic Devonshire lad who accounted it paradise to be let copy at Sir Joshua's ; and of the raw Englishman sent packing, like a portmanteau, through foreign countries. All Northcote's aspirations and many of his grievances are there ; but the old man to whom Scott sat in 1828, "the old wizard Northcote, really like an animated mummy," has to be sketched from outside. And here first is the biting picture done by a man who did not like him.

It was in 1804 that Haydon came to London. Northcote, as being a Plymouth man like himself, was the first artist whom he sought out, having an introduction to him from Prince Hoare.

"I went. He lived at 39, Argyll Street. I was shown first into a dirty gallery, then upstairs into a dirtier painting-room, and there, under a high window with the light shining full on his bald, grey head, stood a diminutive, wizened figure in an old

blue striped dressing-gown, his spectacles pushed up on his forehead. Looking keenly at me with his little shining eyes, he opened the letter, read it, and in the broadest Devon dialect said, 'Zo, you mayne tu bee a peinter, doo'ee? What zort of peinter?' 'Historical painter, sir.' 'Heestoricaul peinter! Why, ye'll starve with a bundle of straw under yeer head.'

"He then put his spectacles down and read the note again; put them up, looked maliciously at me and said, 'I remember yeer vather, and yeer grandvather tu; he used to peint.' 'So I have heard, sir.' 'Ees; he peinted an elephant once for a tiger, and he asked my vather what colour the indzide of's ears was, and my vather told un reddish, and yeer grandvather went home and peinted un a vine vermilion.' He then chuckled, inwardly enjoying my confusion at this incomprehensible anecdote.

"'I zee,' he added, 'Mr. Hoare zays you're studying anatomy; that's no use—Sir Joshua didn't know it; why should you want to know what he didn't?' 'But Michael Angelo did, sir.' 'Michael Angelo! What's he tu du here? You must peint portraits here.' This roused me and I said, clinching my mouth, 'I won't!' 'Won't!' screamed the little man, 'but you must! Your vather isn't a monied man, is he?' 'No, sir; but he has a good

income and will maintain me for three years.' 'Will he? hee'd better mak'ee mentein yerzelf.'" So Haydon went away, not for the last time exasperated, from the company of "little Aqua-fortis."

Fuseli, not a more kindly critic, once described Northcote by saying, "He looks like a rat that has seen a cat." And there is another remark of his which has reference to the extraordinary frugality that in early youth enabled Northcote to become an artist and in old age gained him the reputation of a miser. When the picture of Wat Tyler's death made a great success at the Exhibition of 1787, "Now," said Fuseli, "Northcote will go home, put an extra piece of coal on his fire, and be almost tempted to draw the cork of his one pint of wine when he hears such praise." His old sister, who lived with him and kept his house in Argyll Street, regulated her life on the same principles. Northcote never stirred abroad to pay visits, but delighted to receive them, and talked as he worked. How he talked, let Hazlitt describe.

"The best converser I know is the best listener. I mean Mr. Northcote the painter. Painters by their profession are not bound to shine in conversation, and they shine the more. He pricks up his ears to an observation, as if you had brought him a piece of news, and enters into it with the same avidity and earnestness as if it interested himself

personally. If he repeat an old remark or story, it is with the same freshness and point as for the first time. It always arises out of the occasion, and has the stamp of originality. There is no parroting of himself. His look is a continual, ever varying history piece of what passes in his mind. His face is as a book. There need no marks of interjection or interrogation to what he says. His conversation is quite picturesque. There is an excess of character and *naïveté* that never tires. His thoughts bubble up and sparkle like beads on old wine. The fund of anecdote, the collection of curious particulars, is enough to set up any common retailer of jests that dines out every day; but these are not strung together like a row of galley-slaves, but are always introduced to illustrate some argument, or bring out some fine distinction of character. The mixture of spleen adds to the sharpness of the point, like poisoned arrows. Mr. Northcote enlarges with enthusiasm on the old painters, and tells good things of the new. The only thing he ever vexed me in was his liking the Catalogue Raisonnée. I had almost as soon hear him talk of Titian's pictures (which he does with tears in his eyes, and looking just like them) as see the originals, and I had rather hear him talk of Sir Joshua's than see them. He is the last of that school who knew Goldsmith and Johnson. How finely he described

Pope! His elegance of mind, his figure, his character, were not much unlike his own. He does not resemble a modern Englishman, but puts one in mind of a Roman Cardinal or Spanish Inquisitor. I never ate or drank with Mr. Northcote; but I have lived on his conversation with undiminished relish ever since I can remember, and when I leave it I come out into the street with feelings lighter and more ethereal than I have at any other time. One of his *tête-à-têtes* would at any time make an essay; but he cannot write himself, because he loses himself in the connecting passages, is fearful of the effect, and wants the habit of bringing his ideas into one focus or point of view. A lens is necessary to collect the diverging rays, the refracted and broken angular lights of conversation on paper. Contradiction is half the battle in talking—the being startled by what others say, and having to answer on the spot. You have to defend yourself, paragraph by paragraph, parenthesis within parenthesis. Perhaps it might be supposed that a person who excels in conversation and cannot write would succeed better in dialogue. But the stimulus, the immediate irritation, would be wanting; and the work would read flatter than ever, from not having the very thing it pretended to have." [1]

It has been questioned how much in the published

[1] From "Table Talk," in Baldwin's *London Magazine*.

Conversations was Hazlitt's, and how much belonged to Northcote. I think nobody who reads this memoir can doubt that Hazlitt was not exaggerating Northcote's ability. The narrative of Italian travel is excellent, and in many places the painter expresses his sensations or ideas with a singular freshness. It is, as Hazlitt observes, in the art of putting his thoughts together, not in power of expression, that he is deficient. But the express testimony of a competent eyewitness is worth quoting ; the more so for the light that is thrown on the relations between this odd pair. P. G. Patmore, in "My Friends and Acquaintances," writes as follows :—

"To Mr. Northcote's Hazlitt went frequently and stayed long ; at one time more frequently than to any other place. But his visits to Northcote were in some sort professional, and whatever he did with a view to business, or to any after consideration whatever—anything which did not immediately arise out of the impulse directing it —he did reluctantly and with an ill grace. I have several times been present when Hazlitt has been at Northcote's, and has taken part in these admirable conversations with the venerable artist in which he (Hazlitt) professed that he used to take such delight. But I never saw him for a moment at ease there or anything like himself—that self which he was when sitting in his favourite

corner at the Southampton, or by Lamb's, or my fireside, or, above all, his own. There were points in Northcote's character for which Hazlitt felt the greatest dislike. But, what was of much more consequence to the mutual comfort of their intercourse, he knew perfectly well that Northcote often dreaded and therefore hated him; and when this feeling was acting only tolerated his presence and tattled to him the more entertainingly on that very account. I speak of the period subsequent to Hazlitt's occasional publication of his 'Conversations.' Further on he accounts for Hazlitt's 'overstrained admiration' for Northcote's talk.

"Northcote, by having preserved his intellectual faculties in all their freshness up to the very great age at which Hazlitt first became acquainted with him" (this is a misstatement), "and those faculties having always included an unusual justness of tact in observing the ordinary circumstances to which the daily occurrences of life directed them, had acquired a vast superiority over Hazlitt in his actual personal knowledge of society, and its visible and superficial results on individual men. About Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua, Burke, Goldsmith, and the whole of that coterie of distinguished men of the last age Northcote had things to tell that would have furnished forth half a dozen 'Boswells Redivivus'; and he told them with a degree of

tact, spirit, and dramatic effect that has never been surpassed, if equalled, in any published detail of these true gems of literary and personal history."

The most delightful among all Hazlitt's pictures of his friend is to be found in his essay on the Old Age of Artists, when he contrasts Northcote with an even greater oddity, Nollekens the sculptor. It may be noted that this essay appeared in 1823, three years before the "Conversations" had given Northcote occasion to fear "Boswell Redivivus."

"I saw this eminent and singular person (Nollekens) one morning in Mr. Northcote's painting-room. He had then been for some time blind, and had been obliged to lay aside the exercise of his profession; but he still took a pleasure in designing groups, and in giving directions to others for executing them. He and Northcote made a remarkable pair. He sat down on a low stool (from being rather fatigued), rested with both hands on a stick, as if he clung to the solid and tangible, had an habitual twitch in his limbs and motions, as if catching himself in the act of going too far in chiselling a lip or a dimple in a chin; was bolt-upright, with features hard and square, but finely cut, a hooked nose, thin lips, an indented forehead; and the defect in his sight completed his resemblance to one of his own masterly busts. He seemed, by

time and labour, to 'have wrought himself to stone.' Northcote stood by his side—all air and spirit, stooping down to speak to him. The painter was in a loose morning-gown, with his back to the light; his face was like a pale fine piece of colouring, and his eye came out and glanced through the twilight of the past, like an old eagle looking from its eyrie in the clouds. In a moment they had lighted from the top of Mount Cenis in the Vatican—

> "'As when a vulture on Imaus bred
> Flies tow'rds the springs
> Of Ganges and Hydaspes, Indian streams.'

These two fine old men lighted with winged thoughts on the banks of the Tiber, and there bathed and drank of the spirit of their youth. They talked of Titian and Bernini; and Northcote mentioned that when Roubilliac came back from Rome, after seeing the works of the latter, and went to look at his own in Westminster Abbey, he said, 'By G—d! they looked like tobacco-pipes!'

"They then recalled a number of anecdotes of Day (a fellow-student of theirs), of Barry and Fuseli. Sir Joshua, and Burke, and Johnson were talked of. The names of these great sons of memory were in the room, and they almost seemed

to answer to them—Genius and Fame flung a spell into the air.

> "'And by the force of blear illusion
> Had drawn me on to my confusion,'

had I not been long ere this siren-proof! It is delightful, though painful, to hear two veterans in art thus talking over the adventures and studies of their youth, when one feels that they are not quite mortal, that they have one imperishable part about them, and that they are conscious, as they approach the farthest verge of humanity in friendly intercourse and tranquil decay, that they have done something that will live after them. The consolations of religion apart, this is perhaps the only salve that takes out the sting of that sore evil, Death; and, by lessening the impatience and alarm at his approach, often tempts him to prolong the term of his delay.

"It has been remarked that artists, or at least academicians,[1] live long. It is but a short while ago that Northcote, Nollekens, West, Flaxman, Cosway, and Fuseli were all living at the same time, in good health and spirits, without any diminution of faculties, all of them having long passed their grand climacteric, and attained to the

[1] Mr. Whistler would approve this distinction, though Hazlitt does not make it quite in his sense.

highest reputation in their several departments. From these striking examples the diploma of a Royal Academician seems to be a grant of a longer lease of life, among its other advantages. In fact it is tantamount to the conferring a certain reputation in his profession and a competence on any man; and thus supplies the wants of the body and set his mind at ease. Artists in general (poor devils!), I am afraid, are not a long-lived race.

"Of all the academicians, the painters or persons I have ever known, Mr. Northcote is the most to my taste. It may be said of him truly—

> "'Age cannot wither him, nor custom stale
> His infinite variety.'

Indeed, it is not possible he should become tedious, since, even if he repeats the same thing, it appears quite new from his manner, that breathes new life into it, and from his eye, that is as fresh as the morning. How you hate any one who tells the same story or anticipates a remark of his—it seems so coarse and vulgar, so dry and inanimate! There is something like injustice in this preference—but no! it is a tribute to the spirit that is in the man. Mr. Northcote's manner is completely extempore. It is just the reverse of Mr. Canning's oratory. All his thoughts come upon him unawares, and for this

reason they surprise and delight you, because they have evidently the same effect upon his mind. There is the same unconsciousness in his conversation that has been pointed out in Shakespeare's dialogues ; or you are startled with one observation after another, as when the mist gradually withdraws from a landscape and unfolds objects one by one. His figure is small, shadowy, emaciated ; but you think only of his face, which is fine and expressive. His body is out of the question. It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the *naïveté* and unaffected but delightful ease of the way in which he goes on—now touching upon a picture, now looking for his snuff-box, now alluding to some book he has been reading, now returning to his favourite art. He seems just as if he was by himself or in the company of his own thoughts, and makes you feel quite at home. If it is a member of Parliament, or a beautiful woman, or a child, or a young artist that drops in, it makes no difference : he enters into conversation with them in the same unconstrained manner, as if they were inmates in his family. Sometimes you find him sitting on the floor, like a schoolboy at play, turning over a set of old prints ; and I was pleased to hear him say the other day, coming to one of some men putting off in a boat from a shipwreck, 'That is the grandest and most original thing I ever did!' This was not

egotism, but had all the beauty of truth and sincerity. Thus, whatever is the subject of discourse, the scene is revived in his mind, and every circumstance brought before you without affectation or effort, just as it happened. It might be called picture-talking. He has always pat allusion or anecdote. A young engraver came into his room the other day with a print which he had put into the crown of his hat, in order not to crumple it, and he said it had nearly blown away several times in passing along the street. 'You put me in mind,' said Northcote, 'of a bird-catcher at Plymouth who used to put the birds he had caught into his hat to bring them home, and one day, meeting my father in the road, he pulled off his hat to make him a low bow, and all the birds flew away!' Sometimes Mr. Northcote gets to the top of a ladder to paint a palm-tree or to finish a sky in one of his pictures; and in this situation he listens very attentively to anything you tell him. I was once mentioning some strange inconsistencies of our modern poets, and on coming to one that exceeded the rest he descended the steps of the ladder one by one, laid his pallet and brushes deliberately on the ground, and coming up to me he said, 'You don't say so; it's the very thing I should have supposed of them; yet these are the men that speak against Pope and Dryden.' Never any sarcasms were so fine, so cutting, so careless as

his. The grossest things from his lips seem an essence of refinement; the most refined become more so than ever. Hear him talk of Pope's 'Epistle to Jervas,' and repeat the lines—

> "'Yet should the Graces all thy figures place,
> And breathe an air divine on every face;
> Yet should the Muses bid my numbers roll
> Strong as their charms, and gentle as their soul,
> With Zeuxis' Helen thy Bridgwater vie,
> And these be sung till Granville's Myra die.
> Alas! how little from the grave we claim,
> Thou but preserv'st a face, and I a name.'

Or let him speak of Boccacio and his story of Isabella and her pot of basil, in which she kept her lover's head and watered it with her tears, 'and how it grew, and it grew, and it grew,' and you see his own eyes glisten and the leaves of the basil-tree tremble to his faltering accents."

I do not propose to go here into the quarrel over the "Conversations" between Northcote and Hazlitt. It arose from the fact that the old painter expressed himself with some freedom to Hazlitt about the family of the Mudges (see p. 40), to whom he was under a heavy obligation for his first introduction to Reynolds, and for much patronage. Hazlitt reported the remarks, a Mr. Rosdew, on behalf of the Mudges, protested, and Northcote came to Campbell, then editor of the *New Monthly*, professing a furious but

perhaps not wholly ingenuous rage. At all events the interviews and the records of them went on. But it is probable that Patmore was right as to the mutual distrust between the two suspicious natures; the acquaintance continued because each was useful to the other. Northcote provided Hazlitt with excellent material for articles; Hazlitt gave to Northcote a foretaste of posthumous fame and the power of expressing opinions in a language which no one but Hazlitt could command. For instance —I quote a passage upon the one great painter of his period whom Northcote does not elsewhere mention — who doubts that here the thought is Northcote's but the beautiful expression Hazlitt's?

"Gainsborough had the saving grace of originality; and you cannot put him down for that reason. With all their faults, and the evident want of an early study and knowledge of the art, his pictures fetch more every time they are brought to the hammer. I don't know what it was that his 'View of the Mall in St. James's Park' sold for not long ago. I remember Mr. Prince Hoare coming to me and saying what an exquisite picture Gainsborough had painted of the Park. You would suppose it would be stiff and formal, with the straight rows of trees and people sitting on benches—it is all in motion and in a flutter like a lady's fan. Watteau was not half so airy."

Besides, Northcote desired Hazlitt's positive assistance in the literary efforts from which he was not yet dissuaded. The two collaborated in a Life of Titian, which I trust that even an editor of Northcote's biography may be excused for not having read. The "Fables" also, which were the old man's last and most cherished venture, had the advantage of Hazlitt's revision, though neither Hazlitt nor any one else could have redeemed them from dulness. The first series of a hundred, alternately in prose and heroic couplets, appeared in 1828; the second was posthumous. They were illustrated by admirable woodcuts made from designs which Northcote produced after a singular fashion. He took backgrounds from old prints, cut out spaces and pasted in figures from other prints so as to form a composition according to his judgment. Abundance of press-cuttings preserved in his notebook testify to his interest in this queer venture. The first series was brought out by Lawford, who paid £80, and produced it at his own risk, but for the production of the second Northcote left ample provision in his very odd will. A sum of £1,000, or not exceeding £1,400, was to be assigned by his executors to this purpose. Mr. Edward Southey Rogers was designated as the editor.

Northcote's personal estate was proved—much to the surprise of his contemporaries—at something

under £25,000. The surprising thing is that he should have left so much. His prices for portraits were: five guineas a head previous to his Italian tour; eight guineas up to 1784, when he raised the price to ten; it rose to fifteen in 1788, and in 1794 to twenty guineas. His figure compositions, especially after the failure of his chief patron, Boydell, can hardly have fetched much money in proportion to the time spent upon them. Besides, frugal as the old man had been in personal habits, he had not grudged money to his fancies. One of his favourite beliefs was that there existed a connection between himself and the Stafford Northcote family—a belief which the late Lord Iddesleigh did not discountenance. Several of the opening pages of the memoir (omitted by me) are devoted to proving or rather to asserting this connection. The old painter collected everything he could buy relating to the Northcotes, and at his death left to the then Sir Stafford all his pictures of various Northcotes, the bust of himself by Bonomi, and his manuscript account (in two volumes) of the Northcote family.

Of Northcote as an artist perhaps the less said the better. Four works by him are in the National Portrait Gallery, including a likeness of himself. His work is seen to best advantage in black and white, and it would seem that his chief vogue was in

this kind. The obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* remarks that "Prints from the designs of Mr. Northcote were seen on the walls of the higher order of dwellings in every part of the kingdom. One of the most admired, entitled 'The Village Doctress,' had for several years a considerable sale."

He was, as will be seen in this memoir, a chief pillar of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, and claims to have originated the idea of it (see p. 205). But we are concerned with him here as a source of information, not as an original worker. It may, however be well, for a last word, to discuss the originality of his published works.

Nobody, I believe, challenges the authenticity of his contributions to the *Artist*. They are at least as good as most of the Life of Reynolds, which is the work in dispute; Hazlitt's hand in the "Life of Titian" is admitted. I can say from personal inspection that great masses of the Reynolds Memoirs are transferred bodily from Northcote's original manuscript; but the need for a Mr. Laird of some sort is obvious, to prepare the book for the press. The spelling is of the most fantastic order, the grammar frequently amorphous. If Mr. Laird had confined himself to correcting their irregularities it had been well; unhappily he seems to have been a purist in style, and struck out a good many of Northcote's expressions which were racy of the old man's rough

personality. For instance, at p. 95 there is a story of Goldsmith's bad taste in wearing only half mourning for his mother. "This appears in him," says Northcote, "a kind of Irish bull in wearing such a dress, as to all those who did not know his mother or of her death it was totally unnecessary to wear mourning at all, and to all such as knew of his mother's death, it would appear to be not the proper dress, so that he satisfied nobody and displeased some. Miss Reynolds thought it very brutish in him to call his mother a distant relation."

Mr. Laird corrects "a kind of Irish bull" to "an unaccountable blunder" (which destroys the whole point); and for "very brutish" writes "unfeeling." It does not seem likely that such a reviser is likely to have conferred much upon the book by his attentions.

CHAPTER I

NORTHCOTE'S BOYHOOD; OBSTACLES TO HIS BECOMING AN ARTIST. HE RUNS AWAY TO LONDON. ÆTATIS 1–25.

NORTHCOTE'S manuscript begins with a variety of preambles; a curious cento of misquotations from Shakespeare; a history of the Northcote family; and an explanation of his purpose in writing. Such points in this as seemed of any interest have been dealt with in the Introduction. I take up the thread of his argument where it becomes personal.

"I was born at Plymouth, in the county of Devon, on the 22nd of October, 1746, old style. My family, although ancient and highly respectable were at this time not rich, and that branch of it from whence I sprung was much reduced by a most severe persecution from the Parliament of England in the year 1658, inflicted on Samuel

Northcote, my ancestor, who was mayor of Plymouth borough in that year. Samuel Northcote suffered greatly by fine and imprisonment, though only suspected of disaffection to the jealous Government of that period, because he refused to sign a warrant consistent with his office as a magistrate; which thing he refused to do from motives of scrupulous piety, it being demanded of him on a Sunday, and when he was at his prayers in the church. My father, whose name was Samuel, was by trade a watchmaker, valued by all who knew him for his great integrity, abilities and general knowledge. He also was born and dwelt in the town of Plymouth, and was a pious, studious, humble and ingenious man, one better calculated to make a good use of money when got than to get it; and, although an admirer of the art of painting, he could never be persuaded to give his consent to his son's choice of it as a profession. One reason for this disapprobation was that his own father had been an unsuccessful painter, which had been taught him to consider it as an art difficult of attainment and uncertain of success, therefore not proper to be the profession of one whose sole dependence was to rest on his own industry. For, as I before observed, being more honest than wealthy, it was not in his power to give anything but his good example to his children (three of whom, out of seven, arrived to

years of maturity). Therefore my propensity to the art was by every possible means suppressed instead of being encouraged, nor were any opportunities ever given me of practising it, but such as I stole without my father's knowledge. Another great disadvantage I also laboured under was that my education had been shamefully neglected, for my father, with a philosophical carelessness to domestic affairs, paid no attention to the improvement of his children, and, but for the prudence of my mother, I would never have been taught to read. Reading, writing, and arithmetic was all the school learning I ever got, and this small portion was not acquired till I myself was sensible of the want of it, being then near thirteen years of age. My father had always intended me for his own employment, sorely to my dissatisfaction, for during the entire period, from my earliest infancy to the year 1771, I had never been the distance of twenty miles from the place of my birth. This state of confinement grew more and more insupportable to me in proportion as my mind began to open. This impatience was not a little increased also by the interposition of an old friend of my father's, with whom I was a great favourite, hearing him frequently tease my father to indulge this propensity, which he saw had taken such deep root in his child. This friend was Mr. Henry Tolcher, one of the

senior aldermen of the borough of Plymouth. Mr. Tolcher was a man in years at the time I was born, but had always a great friendship for me, as he thought me a child of much ingenuity, and was therefore frequently persuading my father to send his son to London to study some branch of the art, being firmly of opinion that success would follow the experiment. But my father would never listen to him, and always became angry when the subject was mentioned. Yet all this could not deter the good old friend from speaking, thinking, and sometimes acting for the good, as he conceived it, of his young favourite, and whenever he took a journey to London he always considered it as a part of his business to make inquiries to that purpose, as may be seen by some of his letters, from which I shall give extracts :—

"*Extract of a Letter from Mr. Tolcher to Mr. Samuel Northcote, of Plymouth, Devon.*

" . . . I have a thousand things to tell you, but as I now shall lose hearing some debates in the House of Lords, I must break off abruptly, and only add that I have got *little James* a master; tell him so, and that he must send up his drawing signed "This was done when I was but ten years old." Do enclose it to me, and I will bring it down again. My com-

pliments to Mrs. Northcote, and I am ever most sincerely

"Your humble servant,

"HEN. TOLCHER.

"*From Waghorn's Coffee-house adjoining the House of Lords*, February 13, 1759.

"*To Mr. Samuel Northcote at Plymouth, Devon.*

"LONDON, *March* 24, 1759.

"DEAR SIR,—I had yesterday the favour of your letter with Jemmy's drawing enclosed, which hath been much liked by all to whom I have showed it, and they have not been a few, and all say he ought by all means to be encouraged to go on (as his natural genius leads him), and that he should be put to copy from drawings of the best hands. I assure you my Lord Bath was much pleased with it, as he was also with your letter and the explication you was pleased to add after making a brazen head for me. Mr. Reynolds also liked it—I mean the drawing—and Mr. MacArdel, for whose sight I principally sent for it, said by all means let him practice drawing, and if his father can get him some of the large heads now much in vogue, which are come over in abundance from France, drawn in red chalk, they will be best for him to copy after; and he should also be taught the rudiments of perspective, which will be of use to him

whatever his profession may be ; for that, said he, is of service even from a lord to the meanest artificer.

" I am, dear sir,

" Your faithful and most obedient, humble servant,

" Henry Tolcher.

" My compliments attend Mrs. Northcote, and I had not forgot Sam's crossbow before I left Plymouth."

McArdell, or, as Mr. Tolcher spells him, MacArdel, the famous mezzotint engraver, was born in Dublin in 1710, but came to London at the age of seventeen, and worked there till his death in 1765. Most of his plates were done from portraits by the painters of his own time—Hudson, Hogarth, Reynolds, and others ; some of the finest, however, are after Vandyck.

For the moment nothing came of Mr. Tolcher's assiduity. In 1762 Northcote saw Reynolds for the first time, when the painter, accompanied by Johnson, paid a visit to his native county. Oddly enough, the circumstance is not recorded in the autobiography, but it is related with curious *naïveté* in the Life of Sir Joshua.

" It was about this time I first saw Reynolds, but I had seen several of his works which were in Plymouth (for at that time I had never been out of the county), and those pictures filled me

with wonder and delight, although I was then very young; insomuch that I remember when Mr. Reynolds was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled, I got as near to him as I could from the pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind."

A letter written in the end of this year shows how continually the kind Mr. Tolcher bore his young friend in mind when he was in London.

"LONDON, *December* 29, 1762.

"MY DEAR FRIEND MR. NORTHCOTE,—I write you this at Mr. Reynolds's, and shall carry it home to have it franked. The business of it is to tell you that here is now present Mr. Fisher,[1] an engraver of mezzotinto copper plates, who did the fine print of 'Garrick between Comedy and Tragedy' (which I believe you have seen, or may see, at Mr. Mudge's, jun.). On finding him a master in his way, I could not help asking him, as your son James is often uppermost in my thoughts, and as

[1] Edward Fisher was one of the many Irish mezzotint engravers who flourished last century. He was born in Dublin in 1730, and died in London about 1785. Most of his engravings were from portraits by Reynolds. The picture referred to is, of course, one of Sir Joshua's masterpieces.

I have a love for him, what he would have to teach a lad who had a genius in that way. To which he answered fifty pounds, but then he said if the youth was ingenious and industrious he should not fail, by way of encouragement, to let him gain by his gratuity not less than that sum, as he should not grudge to give him, if he found he merited it, five shillings weekly by way of encouragement; and he said with him he would learn the whole ground of that science, viz., the ground of preparing and the knowledge of every other part belonging thereto, which is not always taught; wherefore, as I love little Jim, I cannot help giving you this account, and you will after mature consideration, and perhaps consulting the child, judge for yourself if convenient for you and him; which at present is all I have to say, save only that my respects attend Mrs. Northcote and Master Sam, and that if you have any commands you may have here I shall be glad to obey them, being very faithfully and affectionately your sincere friend and humble servant,

"Hen. Tolcher.

"Any letter from you under cover to the Earl of Bath will come safe and free. If you have any commands the sooner the better, as I hope to set out soon. Adieu, adieu."

"However, all this friendly interference of the old alderman had no other effect, as I have observed, than to make my father angry, fearing it would (as it did) increase the impatience of his son, who was compelled still to remain at Plymouth, lamenting every hour as lost till he could pursue some branch of the art he loved, for I would have caught at the lowest rather than none."

So far Northcote's narrative has been reproduced almost literally in its quaint verbiage; a few "long constructions strange and plus-quam-Thucydidean" have been reduced to more moderate dimensions. It should be added that in the MS. notebook Northcote, who never failed to take himself seriously, has preserved the drawing "done when I was ten years old," which had the advantage of being liked by Sir Joshua. Infantile accomplishments have advanced since those days; and probably in any large preparatory school one would find a boy who could better it. Nevertheless Mr. Tolcher's zeal in the cause of art and of his "little favourite" is touching; and a very touching circumstance is to be noted that in the list of Northcote's paintings the very last of all is "Alderman Henry Tolcher, half-length, unfinished." In 1829 the artist, then himself turned of eighty, fell to painting a likeness of his old benefactor to whose help and encourage-

ment he owed it that he ever became an artist. The world perhaps does not owe much to Mr. Henry Tolcher on this account, but Northcote had to thank him that, instead of ingloriously making watches at Plymouth, he spent the creditable, distinguished, and, above all, the interesting life of a fairly successful painter.

It was in 1771 that the young Devonshire lad first tried his wings in the world. He writes:—

"I was then arrived to near the twenty-fifth year of my age, and fully determined to gratify that ardent desire which had so long possessed me of seeing the metropolis of the kingdom. The year preceding I had made a drawing in Indian ink of a new-erected assembly room and bathing-place near Plymouth; from this drawing I got a print engraved, and although but a very indifferent performance, yet it sold among my friends and helped to make up a few pounds. This prompted and enabled me to take my flight, otherwise it would have been impossible, as my father never would have given me the opportunity in a supply of money for such a journey. But, tired of my present mode of life, I rather chose to throw myself on the wide world, although with only ten guineas in my pocket (for literally it was no more). Five of them I had been long in saving; and that, added

to the five got by my print, constituted all my fortune.

"Having had a consultation with my elder and only brother, we came to a resolution of going together to London. Our father when informed of this scheme was not heartily consenting to the journey, though I told him that I would return again in the space of a fortnight, which at the time I fully expected would have been the case from necessity, not having any one friend in London or knowledge of what method to pursue, or how to get a livelihood; for having been a kind of prisoner my whole life to one spot, I was in the state of those birds which have always been kept in a cage. If by chance they do obtain their liberty, they perish from the want of those habits which are necessary to procure them their food. But I felt no fear; although without money, as I may say, and absolutely ignorant of the practice of the art I intended to pursue for my livelihood, yet so very desirous was I of remaining in London, that I determined so to do, whatever difficulties I underwent, knowing it to be the only means by which I could procure any information in the art I was so fond of. Accordingly, before my departure from home, I requested a letter of introduction from Dr. John Mudge, an eminent physician of Plymouth, to his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, and

also another from my friend Mr. Tolcher to Sir Joshua. These letters I took care to conceal from the knowledge of both my father and brother, fearing they would have prevented my journey to London had they suspected me of any thoughts of tarrying there or following the profession of painting.

"As London was the great object of desire both of myself and my brother also, we thought the best way to increase our means of pleasure there (as we were circumscribed in purse) would be to spend as little as possible on the road, and, consistently with this idea, we determined to set out on our journey on foot as the season was fine."

Some account should here be given of the Mudge family, to whose introduction Northcote owed so much. They were people singularly distinguished in their friendships, and not themselves without distinction. The founder, Zachariah Mudge, was born at Exeter in 1694, of poor parentage, but with an indomitable ambition for learning. He became second master in a school at Exeter whose principal was John Reynolds, grandfather of the painter; and thus originated the hereditary friendship by which Northcote was ultimately to profit. Mudge took orders, obtained valuable preferment in the Church, and became famous as a preacher.

He was the close friend of Smeaton, the engineer who succeeded in erecting the Eddystone Lighthouse, which in those days was among the world's wonders, and it was Mudge who accompanied Smeaton to the top of the lighthouse after "Laus Deo" had been cut into the last stone set, and there, in the lantern itself, joined the engineer in chanting the Old Hundred, "as a thanksgiving for the successful completion of this arduous undertaking." Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was not born till ten years after Mudge became his grandfather's assistant, painted the old man three times; he introduced Burke to him at his own table, and took Johnson to call on the old gentleman and his wife. This lady is perhaps the best remembered of all the Mudges, for it was she who remonstrated at Dr. Johnson's eighteenth cup of tea. "Madam, you are rude," replied Johnson, and proceeded to a twenty-fifth libation. Mudge left four sons, two of whom were distinguished. Thomas Mudge, the second, was a notable discoverer in the mechanism of watches and chronometers. It is not rash to conclude that through him the elder Northcote, himself a painstaking mechanic in this art, became acquainted with the family. Dr. John Mudge, the fourth son, whom Northcote names as his introducer, was, undoubtedly, the most popular of the family. He was not only a skilful physician, but a

considerable authority upon optical instruments; he is remembered, however, as the friend of Sir Joshua, who, with Dr. Johnson, stayed at his house in Plymouth on their tour in 1762. As a physician he had, it would seem, the healing manner. Northcote told Hazlitt that "Every one was enchanted with his society. It was not wit that he possessed, but such a perfect cheerfulness and good-humour that it was like health coming into the room."

Reynolds painted numerous portraits of the family; about one there is a pleasant circumstance related. Dr. Mudge's son, a boy of sixteen, was in the War Office in London, and by illness was prevented from coming home for his birthday. Reynolds painted and sent to the father at Plymouth, timing it to arrive for a surprise on the birthday, a picture which represented the lad suddenly drawing a curtain and appearing from behind it as an unexpected visitor.

Northcote was censured because Hazlitt, in the published "Conversations," represented him as speaking in disparagement of the Mudges. Yet his strictures did not go much beyond the assertion that Dr. Zachariah was not quite so wise and good a man as Reynolds thought; while he fully admits his "extraordinary talent and great eloquence." According to Northcote it was from Zachariah Mudge that Sir Joshua borrowed his

definition of beauty, "that it is the medium of form," that which is neither long nor short, broad nor narrow, and so forth. About Dr. John Mudge he gives forth no doubtful sound, but pays repeated tribute to his perfections, even saying to Hazlitt, "That he had such a feeling of beauty in his heart it made angels of every one around him."

I resume Northcote's narration of his journey to London :—

"It was on Whit Sunday in the month of May, 1771, at five o'clock in the morning of a beautiful day, that I left Plymouth, armed with my ten guineas, to seek my fortune in the world, and began my journey accompanied by my brother. When we arrived at the hill which gave us the last view of the town my brother looked back on it as he left it and expressed some regret, but I myself lost sight of the spires with a pleasure inexpressible.

"Thus on foot we performed a considerable part of our journey, though at times when tired lessening our fatigue as opportunities might offer on the road by empty carriages or horses ; not that any difficulties were burdensome to one who had promised himself so much pleasure in the end. One day, however, after we had walked from early in the morning, without having met with any help, until

it was growing late in the evening, I was so much exhausted that it produced a bleeding at the nose, and I was obliged to rest myself frequently in the remaining short space of four miles, being at that distance from any house. But this inconvenience, which was the greatest I had suffered, was repaired by a good night's rest at a small alehouse on the road side, called in its sign 'Travellers' Rest'; and so it proved to us weary pedestrians, though in the most humble way, and early the next morning we pursued our journey without any ill consequences attending the former day's fatigue, and not a little joyful to find ourselves alive, as some groundless fears had disturbed our thoughts of robbers and murder; for this house was in a solitary situation and ourselves far distant from any mortal who knew us. Some natural fears, therefore, arose from the novelty of our situation, which to us seemed awful, who knew nothing of the world but from romances.

"At the end of the next day's journey we fared still worse. This was at Woodyates Inn; for being foot-travellers, and making such an appearance as made the landlady of the house conclude that not much was to be got by us, she rudely refused to let us sleep in the house, and as the next stage was at too great a distance for us to reach at that late hour of the night, and also being much fatigued, we were obliged to sleep that night in the

hayloft with the grooms and post-boys. But, being as much in want of rest as our companions of the hayloft, we slept equally sound, and were as much refreshed on our awaking as if we had reposed on beds of down; so true it is that nature is content with little.

"We performed the last part of our journey on the top of the stage-coach, and entered London, I believe, on the fifth day of our journey, about ten o'clock in the morning, and immediately went to the house of one Leftly, a grocer in the Strand, near Exeter Change, where we had been recommended for lodging; but as Leftly had no room in his house at that time prepared to receive us, he got us a bed in the house next door, which was an alehouse (the sign of the 'Barley Mow'), and there we slept the first night in London, and on the next day an upper room was got prepared for us in Leftly's house.

"On the morning after my arrival I paid my first visit to Sir Joshua Reynolds. I went alone, that I might have an opportunity of delivering my letters unknown to my brother (those letters from Mr. Tolcher and Dr. Mudge). Sir Joshua received me with kindness, and offered me any assistance in his power. It is impossible to surpass the pleasure I now received in breathing, as it may be said, in an atmosphere of art, having until this period being

entirely debarred not only from the practice of the art, but even from the sight of pictures of any excellence. The county of Devon does not abound with works of art, and even those few which are scattered here and there in the county I never had an opportunity of seeing."

Upon the same subject Northcote observes in his Life of Sir Joshua, i. p. 3 : "It is worthy of remark that the county of Devon has produced more painters than any other county in England; whilst, at the same time, it must be noticed that till very lately there were fewer collections of pictures—of good ones, at least—in that county than in any other part of England of an equal space." He instances among Devonian artists Hudson, the master of Reynolds; Francis Hayman, "the first historical painter of his time"; Cosway; Humphrey, R.A., Downman, and Cross—"all eminent in their profession." These glories of Devon are now somewhat faded; even Cosway's elaborate prettinesses seem a trifle insincere and mannered; while the fame of Downman is only known among connoisseurs.

The narrative proceeds.

"I now first began to practice with oil-colours, having before this only copied from prints in black and white, as is the common practice of school-

boys, or else making trifling imitations in water-colours. The first picture I copied in London was a small landscape by Rysdale from one in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which copy I afterwards sent as a present to my friend Dr. Mudge.

"My brother, soon growing tired of London, parted from me in about a week after our arrival and returned again to Plymouth, and the situation in which I was left is best described by myself in the following letter to my friend William Elford, afterwards Sir William Elford, Bart., of Devonshire :—

"*To Mr. Wm. Elford, Plymouth.*

"London, *May*, 1771.

"Dear Elford,—I send this answer to your letter by the return of the post, which I assure you is an extraordinary effort, as I attend so closely to painting that I have but little time to write. I had the pleasure of your letter entirely to myself, for my brother had left London on the Friday night before I received it, and will be in Plymouth, I hope, before you receive this. Your fishing-rod is bought and delivered to Captain Hunter, who sails in about a week.

"I spend all my daytime at Sir Joshua Reynolds's house copying from the pictures he is so

good as to lend me. I am now about a landskip by Rysdale, which is thought to be very fine, and I shall next copy 'The Storm,' by Vandervelde, from which the print is taken.

"I fear I shall not be able to make many copies of pictures because I intend to do them with much care and, consequently, very slow, for the quantity which Sir Joshua has in his collection is innumerable, some of them by the most famous masters, and fine beyond imagination. His house is to me a very paradise; all the family behave with great good-nature to me, and particularly Sir Joshua's two pupils.

"Miss Reynolds has promised to show me her paintings, for she paints very fine, both history and portrait.

"I am sure you would like London, for here you may find every pleasure which the world produces; on my part I fear I must leave it long before I have my fill of it.

"I think you must remember the drawing in water-colours which I took with me to London of a Drake, and also another of the Eddystone lighthouse; I showed both those to Sir Joshua; the Drake he seemed much pleased with, but said the great difficulty was to colour so clearly with oil-colours.

"The Eddystone lighthouse he found but small

fault with, and when I told him my intention of selling it to a printseller or engraver, he was so kind as to say he would speak to one about it, and said he thought a print from it might sell. He then showed me the landskip by Rysdale which I might copy first, and gave me the liberty of painting it in his house, which I have since done. The place allotted to me to paint in is a kind of hall or parlour, which is not made much use of by the family.

"The first day I went there to paint I saw one of Sir Joshua's pupils, and on conversing with him was much surprised to find that his scholars were absolute strangers to Sir Joshua's manner of working, and that he made use of colours and varnishes which they knew nothing of, and always painted in a room distant from him; that they never saw him unless he wanted to paint a hand or a piece of drapery from them, and then they were always dismissed as soon as he had done with them.[1] He has but two young gentlemen with him at this time, and they both behave to me with great good-nature and are very willing to assist me, but one of them tells me that a man must become a great proficient in the art to make a figure in London, as England is now become the seat of painting.

[1] Compare p. 226.

"I find Sir Joshua is so entirely occupied all day with business or company that I have seldom an opportunity of seeing him, but at some time when he has seen more of my work I shall speak particularly to him and desire to know if he thinks it possible that I could live in London at any rate by the practice of the art. I have not been able to attend so much to painting as I wished or as I shall in future, for the week my brother was in town I was forced to go about with him to see the city and also on business, but now I shall attend closely to it and make the utmost of my time whilst I remain here, as I fear it will not be long.

"One thing I have met with here which seems a curious coincidence of circumstances. In the same house where I lodge there lodges also a young man who is very nearly in the same predicament with myself. He is almost twenty years of age, is called James, and was bred a clockmaker in the city of Norwich, but always had the most violent desire to be a painter, and used to get up at all hours in the morning to practice the art, so that at last his master, seeing how strong an inclination he had for painting, allowed him two hours every day out of his working time to employ in it. This continued for a short time, but when the young man saw and read Sir Joshua's discourse, which was the second given to the Royal Academy, he could no longer suffer the

confinement of his business, and without having any the least personal knowledge of Sir Joshua he sent him a letter, for, as he told me, he thought that a man so fired with the art as Sir Joshua seemed to be by his discourses would surely have a pleasure in assisting all lovers of it. He received an answer which I have not seen, but in consequence of it his master released him from the remaining part of his apprenticeship, and he immediately came to London, where he copied some of Sir Joshua's pictures, but afterwards, by means of an old woman servant, he got admission into the house of Mr. Lock, a man of large fortune, who has a vast collection of paintings and sculpture, and is a great judge of both. Here he copied some of the best pictures without the knowledge of Mr. Lock, apprehending his displeasure; but so much on the contrary did it turn out that, when Mr. Lock discovered it, he immediately invited him to his house to copy any pictures he chose, and also, when he found so violent a desire in him for the art, he told him he should make the house as his own, and very soon after placed him with Mr. Cipriani, who was brought over from Italy by Mr. Lock, and is one of the greatest history painters in England. He also allows pocket-money to the young man, whose name is Brunton.

"Adieu, &c., &c. J.N."

About Brunton I can discover nothing; but this letter is an interesting illustration of the extent to which patronage was carried. Mr. Lock, however, went somewhat beyond the mark in saying that he had "brought over Mr. Cipriani." This celebrated historical painter and engraver was born in Florence in 1727, studied, curiously enough, under an Englishman there, and probably by that means was brought into relation with English artists and connoisseurs. He came to London in 1775, and apparently attracted Royal notice, for he was nominated by George III. to the Royal Academy in 1768. His pictures are best known in Bartolozzi's reproductions of them.

As to what Northcote says of Sir Joshua's pictures and of Miss Reynolds's art, he soon grew more critical. At p. 223 will be found his opinion of the old masters purchased by Reynolds; and he, amongst other people, frequently repeated Sir Joshua's saying "that the pictures which his sister painted made everybody else laugh and made him cry." Her portraits, Northcote told Hazlitt, were an exact reproduction of all her brother's defects. Johnson sat to her, and the result, as the sitter declared, was "not Johnson but Johnson's grimly ghost." However, few people were so well beloved by Johnson as the lady whom he used to call "dearest Rennie." One day in Thrale's dining-

room the question was raised whether any mind would bear examination under a microscope. "None that I know," said Johnson, "except it were my dearest Miss Reynolds'; hers is very near purity itself." She seems to have been uniformly kind to Northcote; the only person with whom she quarrelled was Sir Joshua, and not long after this period she ceased to keep house for him. There is an amusing tale of her unwillingness to assume the grandeur which he desired, told at p. 245, and at p. 66 a letter of Northcote's gives some hint of the strained relations between brother and sister.

Northcote had also written an account of his situation to his kind friend Dr. Mudge, who returned the following answer. It shows that Samuel Northcote had not taken amiss the news which the younger Samuel brought him of James's projected stay in London.

"Dear Sir,—I have intended for several posts past to assure you of my best wishes and at the same time to thank you for both your letters, but by some means or other I have been constantly prevented. I was rather uneasy when I received your last letter to find that by a misapprehension of Mr. Elford you had been informed that I was displeased with your silence; I know you will give me credit

when I assure you it was a mistake; I own I wished much to hear from you before your brother came down, and to know what kind of prospect was placed before you, but since I have received your first letter I entirely depended for my further information on your occasional correspondence with your brother. I am much pleased to find that your father seems disposed and perfectly reconciled to any schemes in the painting way, whether your encouragement should turn out sufficient to induce you to settle in London, or otherwise to tarry so long as pecuniary considerations will permit you, so as to lay in such a fund of knowledge and make those acquirements which will at least turn out advantageous supposing you to return into the country. If upon the whole you should find that there is no prospect of settling in London, and yet should wish to stay some considerable time longer, I must insist on this promise you give me that you will not suffer the scantiness of your finances to disconcert your schemes, but that you will candidly give me a hint. I will with great pleasure send you a remittance immediately.

"PLYMOUTH, *July* 19, 1771."

As will be seen in the next chapter Northcote's habitual independence restrained him from profiting by this generous offer.

CHAPTER II

NORTHCOTE BECOMES A PUPIL OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

"TO return to our narrative. The greatest fear I now had was how to manage when I should have exhausted my small stock of money, being very unwilling to solicit my father for any supply; and so great was my dread of being obliged to quit my studies in London, that for a time it lay very heavy on my mind, and so affected me that it disturbed my nights with dreams, fancying I was again at Plymouth with my family, who would not suffer me to leave them; from such dreams I would often awake in affright, and I became much perplexed in my thoughts to fix on some mode of life to enable me to study the art, having predetermined not to importune my family for money, who might, and would then with justice on their side, have insisted on my return to Plymouth. Nor to any friend I could not bear the thought of applying for aid, having been bred up in all the pride of independence, such as the most genuine love of

liberty can bestow, disdaining obligation to another while there remained any possible and proper means by which I could assist myself. This opinion, together with an inviolable love of truth, were the great maxims of my family.

"To supply, therefore, my immediate wants, I had recourse to employing myself in the colouring or tinting prints of birds for a natural history published by Hooper, a printseller on Ludgate Hill, to whom I became known by offering for sale the drawing in water-colours of the Drake, which I drew when at Plymouth. By this industry I was enabled to support myself, and also found sufficient time to work most part of the day for improvement in copying in oil-colours from the pictures at Sir Joshua Reynolds'. I was wondered at by that family as a curiosity of diligence, although I never let them know that I did any work besides what they saw me do at that house. This practice I continued for the space of a month or six weeks, it being in the long days of the summer season."

What Northcote states here somewhat pedantically is put with charming simplicity in a letter to his brother :—

"*To Mr. Samuel Northcote, Jun., at Plymouth.*

"London, *May*, 1771.

"My dear Brother,—When I received your

packet it gave me infinite pleasure, as you can well conceive who have yourself been, as I am now, far distant from your family and first friends. Yet I must confess that the happiness which I now enjoy is fully equal to what I expected, which is very seldom the case, as there is generally something enthusiastic and chimerical in our ideas of a promised pleasure which is scarcely ever realised. I must own that I always expected some bitter with the sweet, and so there is ; it does not proceed from those causes from which I had expected it, but I have it from others. Indeed, I find it a very difficult task to maintain myself in London, and at the same time to pursue a plan for my improvement in painting. I have fortunately got some prints of birds to colour for a printseller on Ludgate Hill, at the price of one shilling per sheet, and when I can get any from him to do I can colour one in a morning before I go to Sir Joshua's, where I make my appearance about nine o'clock, but how long this may continue is very uncertain. You had best not let anybody know these particulars. I remain working at Sir Joshua's till the evening, when I take a walk in the Park, or over Westminster Bridge and George's Fields to the Borough, or else do any errands in the City. As to my own habitation, I still continue in the same room as when you was with me. It would be very in-

convenient for me to lodge in the Borough, because it is so far from Leicester Fields."

[Sir Joshua's house was on the west side of Leicester Square; it is now occupied by Messrs. Puttock and Simpson, auctioneers. The studio has been enlarged to make a sale room, but many of the rooms and the staircase remain as they were. Unfortunately this dwelling, where memories cluster so thickly, is under sentence of demolition.]

"I am very much obliged to for your advice in regard to my living so as to be comfortable, but London, or rather I should say the employment I am engaged in, would render almost any state to me agreeable, for the art is to me beyond every other amusement on earth. Yet to be sure it would be much better for me if I were settled with some family to board."

"I go regularly to Sir Joshua Reynolds's every day and copy from the pictures in his collection; he is very kind to me, and often invites me to dine with him. And Miss Reynolds is the most good-natured woman I ever met with.

"The only circumstance which takes from my happiness is the little progress I now find I have made in the art, for I have so little practice, and my methods, from having had no instruction, are so very different from the right road, that I find I am very much behindhand. I am now thoroughly

convinced that it requires the whole of your time and thoughts to make a good painter, and then it is not done without having a considerable natural capacity, as well as fondness for study. For, as Sir Joshua says, he who would make a great painter must know no hours of dissipation.

"I am very sorry that it was not in my power to have begun earlier in my life to study the art, and now that I cannot continue it. For, notwithstanding that at present my work appears odious to me, yet my hope is that by practice I might conquer many difficulties, and the pleasure I should certainly receive from improvement makes me most earnestly wish I could follow the art for the remainder of my life. For although I cannot expect to find perfect happiness in it, I am very sure I shall be very far from happiness without it.

"Sir Joshua seems much pleased with the copies I have made, and so is Miss Reynolds, who says she never knew a person so fond of painting, and paid me the compliment to say that great things might be expected from my application, but it requires much time to get a readiness of hand.

"Sir Joshua behaves to me just as he does to his pupils, or rather with more friendship.

"I was afraid my mother was uneasy at my not answering your letter sooner, but let her know she cannot have a stronger proof of my being in good

health than my not writing, for, was I to be ill, I should be prevented from my work and soon let her know of my distress.

"I remain, ever your affectionate brother.

"JAMES NORTHCOTE."

Samuel Northcote, to whom this was written, remained his brother's lifelong correspondent. The pair seem to have kept each other's letters; for James, methodical though he was, is scarcely likely to have preserved copies of his own early epistles. But whether or not Samuel kept the letters which James wrote, James kept Samuel's, and he reproduces several in this memoir, judging very rightly that they were worth preservation. The elder brother's reply to the letter just quoted proves sufficiently that James did not monopolise the brains of the family.

"PLYMOUTH, *July* 14, 1771.

"*Sunday*,

"DEAR BROTHER,—I was much pleased to find Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds behaved so kind to you, and I was glad to see by your letter since that you are so sensible of the happiness of your situation—indeed, the happiness of any situation depends entirely on the idea we at the present have of it; and then I make no doubt but that you are very happy with the advantages which you at present

have; yet I suppose it hardly equals the notion you would have formed had you read that a young man, who was very fond of painting, went to London in Sir Godfrey Kneller's time, and, being introduced to him by a friend, was treated by him with great kindness, and suffered to copy any pictures in his collection at his house, and had also frequent invitations to dine with him. I am sure you would have thought such a person highly fortunate, and that such happiness was hardly to be too dearly purchased. You must surely see that this is a distant view of your situation. I again repeat that I believe you greatly enjoy your condition at this time. But as we are always too apt to compare our present state with something better, I don't know whether or not Brunton's great good luck may not have hurt your ideas of your own fortune; excuse these suspicions and hints in consequence of them, as I know we sometimes pass over the means of happiness as I passed over an old Roman causeway in the London Road, not knowing till after that I had been near it. I think we may compare happiness in one particular to the Ignis Fatuus—that of our almost losing its appearance when in the very midst of it, though both of them glare in our eyes when at a distance.

"As I did not make the request in my last letter, I must desire you will attend to it in this,

that you will let us know as many particulars as you can concerning the employment of your time as well in painting as otherwise, and whether you have attempted a portrait or not, as I imagine you would soon make a much better hand of it than many who get a very good maintenance by it; and I make no doubt but, could you support yourself in your present condition for a year or so, it would prove a lasting advantage. I should likewise be glad to know what Sir Joshua Reynolds has said to you in this time, all which may be set down a little at a time, and so it would become more easy, as whatever concerns your happiness cannot be indifferent to

"Your affectionate brother,

"SAMUEL NORTHCOTE.

"P.S.—The family are (thank God) all in perfect health and join in love to you. You may now write to me without reserve (as to your scheme of staying in London), for principally by the inquiries of one and another your father is pretty well acquainted with the whole affair, and as he finds you are not likely to prove an expense to him, and that I am here to assist him, at times he speaks of it without the least disapprobation.

"Our friend Bill Fillis and his wife and family frequently inquire for you, and I have given them

such scraps of your letters as you would not have disapproved of their hearing; they have a notion that you are to make a great painter and not to return to us again.

"I suppose you will soon be capable of judging what stay you shall make in London, as I wish I may have early intelligence when you are about to return.

"Yours, &c.,

"S. NORTHCOTE."

It would be impossible to devise more sensible and sincere encouragement to a young man in Northcote's position; and the note about "our friend Bill Fillis and his family" gives one a glimpse of the little sensation produced in that quiet country town by his enterprise. It was soon to be crowned with success, and he relates his promotion simply and frankly.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds, now perceiving my evident fondness for the art, and also knowing that he could soon make me useful to him in his profession, noticed me one evening late in the gallery looking with much attention at the pictures, spoke to me and asked if I would come and live in the house for four or five years and assist him in the same manner as his other scholars.

"This offer was immediately accepted with the

extremest degree of pleasure, I being by this means provided with my first wants—namely, board and lodging, besides being situated, as may be said, in the centre of art. My only want now was a little money for clothes, and this was kindly and voluntarily supplied by my brother during the whole time of my being with Sir Joshua.

"I now began seriously to consider painting as my profession, having till this period had no higher hope than to acquire a sufficient knowledge of the art to make it an amusement for my leisure hours.

"It should be considered as an excuse for my not having done more in the art, that I was nearly five-and-twenty years of age when I first began to study it as my profession.

"A large part of my life had been totally lost in respect to my studies in the art, and that part of life too in which the mind acts with most vigour, and is most apt to retain the impressions it receives. Of this I was so sensible that I resolved if possible to supply by industry what I had lost in time, encouraging myself with the hope that I might at least be able to gain the power of painting a portrait with some portion of credit to myself; yet still despairing of doing more, or of arriving at that degree of excellence which my ardour for the arts had given me the hope of attaining, could I have begun at an earlier period of my life.

"All men who surpass in an eminent degree their competitors, let the profession be what it may, must be possessed of two qualities, viz., ambition, which is the parent of activity, accompanied by strong intellectual power; since the great motive of their action has been, not so much a predilection for any one particular study or employment, as a proud desire of distinction by conquering all competitors in that art or science which accident has led them to adopt. It was this idea which made Sir Joshua Reynolds say that, had he been bred a surgeon, as was at first intended, he should have endeavoured to complete his career in being the greatest physician of his time; meaning to express that it was ambition and not the particular love of the art of painting which made him eager to excel.

"The vulgar are apt to think that a man may have a great genius, as they term it, for one particular acquirement and be a fool in everything else. But this is far from truth. A man may indeed be ignorant of many things, and yet very eminent in one science or art, because so large a portion of his time has been devoted to conquer that one that little time has been left him to bestow on any other study. 'So vast is art, so small is human wit.'"

After these somewhat fallacious remarks on the

artist's ambition, Northcote reproduces a letter to his brother, which, as he says, "tends to show something of the manners of Sir Joshua Reynolds."

"Dear Brother,—I received your letter, which much entertained me. It was brought to me while I was at dinner with Miss Reynolds, Miss Offy Palmer—a niece of Sir Joshua's—and Mr. Clark. Miss Reynolds also had a letter by the same post, but it was not from Sir Joshua, who is at this time in Paris, for he never writes to her; and between ourselves I believe but seldom converses as we used to do in our family, and never instructs her in painting. I found she knew nothing of his having invited me to be his scholar and live in the house till I told her of it; she has the command of the household and the servants as much as he has. Do not ever mention anything I wrote to you of him to anybody, for I would not have it thought that I find the smallest fault in a man who has been so kind to me and is possessed of so many noble qualities. You wish to know our kind of conversations. In general they are but trifling, but as you seem desirous of having some account of them, I will at times give you such parts as I think are best worth remarking. Miss Reynolds is the most conversible, and very sensible, as you may imagine.

"The other day Dr. Goldsmith dined here; it

was the first time I ever saw him. I had before told both Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds that I had a great curiosity to see him, and when I came into the room the first word Sir Joshua said to me was, 'This is Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Northcote, whom you so much wished to see; why did you desire to see him?' The suddenness of the question rathe confused me, and I replied, 'Because he is a notable man.' This in one sense of the word was so much unlike his character that Sir Joshua laughed heartily and said he should in future always be called the Notable Man, but what I meant was a man of note or eminence. He seems an unaffected and most good-natured man, but knows very little about pictures, which he often confesses with a laugh.

"I write you these trifling circumstances in hopes they may divert you, but if not they must appear silly and I cannot be a judge of them myself. Indeed, there are many such trifles which I could relate, but which seem too inconsiderable to write.

"Adieu, &c.,

"J. Northcote."

This story is also related in the Life of Sir Joshua. "Notable" has almost lost its double meaning now; but one still occasionally speaks of a "notable housekeeper," and certainly, notable in the sense of thrifty and industrious, would have been an

odd word to apply to Goldsmith. The Mr. Clark mentioned in the letter was presumably Thomas Clark, an Irishman, who about 1768 entered the studio of Reynolds, where, however, he did not remain long. "He drew heads well but was a very poor colourist," says Bryan ("Dict. of Painters and Engravers").

The following tribute to Northcote's professional skill seems to have been cherished by the artist; it is one of the few stories of himself introduced into the Life of Reynolds.

"Early in the time that I spent with Sir Joshua, for the sake of practice I painted the portrait of one of the housemaids and made it a very strong likeness. One day when at dinner with Miss Reynolds I mentioned to her that I had done this picture, and being desirous of having her opinion upon it brought the picture into the parlour and placed it on the floor, resting against a chair for her to see it.

"Sir Joshua had a large macaw, which he has often introduced into his pictures (as may be seen by many prints from him). This bird was a great favourite and was always kept in this room, where he became a nuisance to this same housemaid, whose department it was to clean it after him, and of course they were not good friends to each other.

When the picture was placed against the chair the bird was at a distant part of the room and did not perceive it as he walked about on the floor, but when he turned about and saw the portrait of his enemy he quickly spread his wings and in the utmost fury ran over to it and stretched himself up to bite at the face; but finding it had no motion in it he next attacked the hand in the picture; but finding it had no life he marched round the picture and got behind it as if to examine what it was, and then walked away again at a distance; but whenever he turned about and again saw the picture he would repeat the same thing. This trial was afterwards made a frequent exhibition of in the presence of Edmund Burke, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, and almost all of Sir Joshua's friends, and never failed of success; and what made it the more remarkable was that when the bird was tried with any other portrait he took no sort of notice of it. What proof of merit in the picture it may imply I do not know, but it certainly was one of my first attempts at portrait."

Northcote's good fortune in being employed by Sir Joshua naturally set his father's mind at ease: a letter from the brother testifies to the fact. A passage or two may be extracted from the epistle to show the curious elaboration with which the

young men wrote to each other, and the subjects they wrote on :—

"I have a great opinion of your capacity, and that, with your assiduity and peculiar advantages, may do great things. For your comfort I will acquaint you with what the great Sir Isaac Newton once said respecting his vast discoveries: that he owed more of them to a habit of patient thinking, which he had early contracted, than to any superior ability. I met with this some time since in a book of philosophy. This consideration must prove an uneasiness to a sensitive man who has not made the best use of his time, but to people in general it would be a consolation, so they would much rather be thought rogues than fools, because they think, I suppose, the first will be allowed to be in their own power, whereas the latter, being esteemed more a defect of nature, is deemed incurable, and so please themselves, that the world will esteem their defect as of their own making rather than of nature's. Part of this I wrote in my last letter and then rubbed it out, but having an opportunity I spliced it up here.

"I look on your request that I would not give myself the trouble to write my letters twice over as a joke; I think the many faults in my last must prove it to be the original.

"I was much pleased with your account of Dr. Chancey's remarks upon Mr. Garrick, viz., that he was a much more perfect player when he first came out on the stage than at the latter period of his life, when he had been trammelled in all the tricks of the stage. Dr. Mudge was in Mr. Garrick's company at Mount Edgcumbe this last summer, and heard him say that his regard for his mother's peace and happiness prevented him from appearing on the stage till after her death, and that he imagined this circumstance greatly contributed to the vast success he had met with, for being then turned thirty his judgment was more mature, and this occasioned his avoiding many errors which he might have run into had he begun earlier in life."

Here follow some remarks upon Nostalgia, from which it may be inferred that all Northcote's felicity in his art did not save him from a twinge of home-sickness now and then, and the end of the letter is really touching.

"The consideration that those things which are exceedingly amusing to yourself might not prove so to another may possibly sometimes prevent your writing some particulars about the Academy and painting, but I must assure you, that those accounts,

next those of your welfare, are the most pleasing to me. I am also exceedingly glad to know anything which Sir Joshua or Miss Reynolds say, or, indeed, any of their companions. From the nature of your situation, living under the auspices of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and being employed in the Academy amidst the most curious artists of the times, you have vastly the advantage of me, as the most trifling occurrences you can mention are acceptable. On the other hand, did I not live with our parents, and so, I thank God, have the happiness of informing you of their welfare, I should think all I could say of this place trifling enough, and should consider our correspondence in the same light I do the traffic between the Europeans and negroes, who receive scraps of looking-glass and tinsel baubles in exchange for their gold and ivory. Should either of us at any time be inclined to think the writing these long letters the least irksome, we must recollect the uneasiness on both sides which attends the neglect of it, and so fall to more briskly. You must consider your long letters as gratifying the desires of the whole family, for every one of us receive an equal pleasure when the pleasure of the first reading has been mine. Your father has always attended, and your mother (forgetting all other things at the time) listens with great earnestness to every word, and generally lets fall some

tears to your account (I need not say they are tears of joy; thank God we have never had occasion to shed others since your and my remembrance).

"Yours, &c.,

"SAM. NORTHCOTE."

There was, however, a definite link between the world of art and Northcote's home acquaintances. Sir Joshua was a Devonshire man, and his native town, Plympton, decided to do him honour. Samuel Northcote writes caustically enough of this tribute:—

"PLYMOUTH, *September* 9, 1772.

"DEAR BROTHER,—This being a good opportunity, your mother has chosen to send you four guineas.

"I was much surprised when I first heard from you that Sir Joshua was coming down to be made an alderman of Plympton; I had heard of this, indeed, before from Mr. Mudge, but I gave not the least credit to the information, looking upon the foul transactions of a dirty borough as things quite foreign to Sir Joshua Reynolds's pursuits. Indeed, the only way I can account for this is by supposing that Sir Joshua's mind has been so much engaged in the pursuits of knowledge in the art that he has

not looked abroad to observe the villainy and corruption in those affairs. But, on the contrary, he perhaps retains somewhat of the ideas he had of a Plympton alderman when he was a boy looking up at them all as persons of dignity. How much will he be surprised when he finds into what a nasty jakes he has put his hands! He will be as much surprised as the landlord of the alehouse who found his wife with another man, and the reply she made to her husband when he upbraided her may, with a little alteration, be applied to Sir Joshua: 'These things must be done, my dear, if we sell ale.' And if ever the devil should take it into his head to stand forth himself as a candidate for the borough (having hitherto done it by proxy), and would outbid the others, Lord E—— and all his clan must vote accordingly.

"Lately here an absolutely new French merchant ship was driven upon the rocks in Cat water; the goods were taken out and placed in cellars in Southside Street. It is remarkable that an innumerable parcel of snails were observed creeping on those goods; these, you are to understand, were some of the Frenchmen's fresh provisions, and had escaped out of the barrels they were kept in. Some of the boys in the street had got at this particular, and were calling after the poor shipwrecked fellows, 'Snail, snail, put out your long horns!'

"James Yonge wrote to his aunt that he heard Sir Joshua say that you had improved as much in one year as any pupil he ever had before had done in three. You may suppose we were much pleased with this news.

"I fancy I should be much pleased with your taste in painting, as you introduce dogs and horses, &c. Over and above my fondness for pictures of animals I think it takes away the stiffness of a mere portrait, and makes it savour a little of the historical kind of painting. The pleasure I enjoy in seeing animals drawn, especially of the savage kind, is such that, was I about to have my portrait painted, I should be contriving how they might with propriety be introduced in the picture, and rather than leave them out I would, like Daniel, be painted in the lions' den.

"I remember I saw at Sir Joshua's a painting of his of two noblemen hunting, in which there was a rich group of wild animals, which it was supposed they had killed in their day's sport.[1]"

[1] It was the full-length portrait of Colonel Ackland, the son of Sir Thomas Ackland; the other person with him in the picture was a Lord Sidney. These friends afterwards quarrelled, and neither of them would take the picture, although it was exquisitely fine. It was afterwards purchased by the Earl of Carnarvon, and is now in his possession. He is nephew of Lady Harriot Ackland, the wife of Colonel Ackland who is represented in the picture; she was the daughter of the Earl of Ilchester and aunt to the present Earl of Carnarvon and sister to his mother.—NORTHCOTE.

Northcote did not fail to gratify this taste of his brother's, and one of his best pictures represents Samuel Northcote with a hawk on his wrist.

The next letter shows the date at which Northcote first exhibited in the Academy :—

"*April* 18, 1773.

"I am greatly pleased at hearing that you have finished Mr. T. Mudge's portrait, and am just now returned from Mr. Mudge's. He showed me an elegant card which Sir J. Reynolds made a present of to Mrs. Parker, designed by Cipriani and engraved by Bartolozzi.

"We were all pleased to hear that Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds thought your portrait of T. Mudge worthy a place in the Exhibition, and Mr. Mudge was no less pleased when he heard it; and though he was impatient to have the picture before he learnt this news, yet now he says he could wait with patience for it six months (was it required) with satisfaction.

"Yours, &c.,

"S. Northcote."

Mr. T. Mudge, the horologist, resided in London. Probably the portrait was done for his brother, Dr. John Mudge.

At this time Northcote, having been two years

absent from his family, took the opportunity of going to Plymouth, in company of some friends. Sir Joshua was at Plymouth at the same time, and was then made mayor of Plympton. James Northcote returned with his two friends to London before Sir Joshua, and received the following letters from his brother. As the letters give a pleasant view of the great painter, I reproduce them :—

"PLYMOUTH, *October* 3, 1773.

"DEAR BROTHER,—Your letter to-day, with the account of your safe arrival in London and that of your kind friends, gave us pleasure.

"I believe Sir Joshua Reynolds went to Mount Edgcumbe this morning ; your mother saw him ride up before our house with Mr. Mudge in a post-chaise. He speaks of leaving Plymouth on Tuesday morning, but those who know anything of mayor-swearing think that it cannot be so soon, as there is much concomitant business to be done. I find Sir Joshua's receiving the Sacrament is one particular. This the thoroughpaced call qualifying. Besides, the Plympton folks are all on tiptoe ready for a dance, and surely Sir Joshua will not leave them without giving a ball. But I suppose you will be more pleased to hear that Sir Joshua called on Friday to see your pictures and liked them. I happened to dine at home that day, and

just after dinner he called in and asked to see your father's portrait, imagining that you had just finished it. After he had seen this he desired I would let him see the others of me. He said your father's was a very good head, but not so good a likeness as mine, and observed that the nose in your father's picture was too full at the end. He desired likewise to see that of your grandmother by Gandy (for your father had told him he had such a one). This, he said, was a very good picture, and remarked that the eyes were finely painted, and that very few of Sir Godfrey Kneller's were so good. I mentioned to him what you had said of my having injured the picture by cleaning it, and after looking at it closely he said that you was mistaken, that I had left some dirt upon it, but had taken away none of the paint.

"Mr. and Mrs. Mudge intend going to Plympton to-morrow in their one-horse chaise, and Sir Joshua takes Nancy and Kitty with him in a post-chaise."

"PLYMOUTH, *October* 17, 1773.

"Your father saw but very little of Sir Joshua after you left us, as he was engaged to dine out for every day after that time, so in consequence we had not the pleasure Mr. Mudge designed for us of dining with Sir J. R. at his house.

"Mr. Mudge sent up for your father just before

Sir J. R. left Plymouth, and he spent a short time with him at Mr. Mudge's. Sir J. R. told your father that you had behaved very well with him, and that you had no affectation; he said, indeed, you was so little inclined to it that you had retained fully your Devonshire dialect. I can suppose that you will rather snuff at the first particular of this intelligence. But the latter part is something more rare than the insipid character of being only a well-inclined young man.

"&c., &c.,

"SAMUEL NORTHCOTE."

It is rather an amusing fact that Sir Joshua has conspicuously recorded this municipal promotion to the mayoralty of his native town. The inscription on his portrait of himself in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence runs as follows :—

"Joshua Reynolds Eques Auratus,
Academiæ Regiæ Londini Præses
Juris Civilis Apud Oxonienses Doctor
Regiæ Societatis Antiquariæ
Londini Socius
Honorarius apud Florentinos Academiæ
Imperialis Socialis Necnon Oppidi
Natalis Dicti Plympton
Comitat : Devon :
Præfectus Justitiarius Morumque Censor.

CHAPTER III

ANECDOTES OF SIR JOSHUA'S CIRCLE

"AMONGST the many advantages which were to be gained in such a house as Sir Joshua's," writes Northcote, "it was not one of the least that I had the opportunity of profiting by the familiar intercourse which was always kept up by Sir Joshua with every person of genius and learning of that time. A few anecdotes may amuse the curious, and, though trifling in themselves, yet as they relate to eminent characters it seems a pity to give them over to oblivion. Of the illustrious dead even the slightest circumstances of truth are ever received with pleasure; they are a kind of relics, and we esteem them as a devotee does the vestiges of his saint."

It is necessary to reproduce as a sort of caution the comment which Allan Cunningham makes on this series of anecdotes (all of which were reproduced in the Life of Reynolds).

"Mrs. Gwatkin, one of the nieces of Reynolds, says that her uncle's pupils dined by themselves when he had any company at his table. When there were no visitors they dined with the family, took one glass of wine, put back their chairs and retired. She was surprised at what Northcote said about conversations at which he could not have been present, and she imagined that he got them from her aunt, Miss Reynolds, who was partial to her townsman and liked to hear him talk."

The truth probably is that the pupils—certainly Northcote, who was older than the rest, and shrewd enough to be a good talker—were frequently present when such intimates as Johnson and Goldsmith dropped in informally to dinner. It will be seen that only one of the following stories (that on p. 99) implies Northcote's presence at a considerable gathering. It is not like what one knows of the man to claim a privilege to which he had not been admitted; and a great privilege it undoubtedly was. There probably never was a table at which the standard of talk was higher. "Northcote says," wrote Hazlitt, "people had a great notion of the literary parties at Sir Joshua's. He" (Reynolds) "once asked Lord B—— to dine with Dr. Johnson and the rest; but though a man of rank and also of good information, he seemed as much alarmed

at the idea as if you had tried to force him into one of the cages at Exeter Change." This nobleman's apprehensions were not wholly without foundation. Dunning (Lord Ashburton) happened one day to be the first arrival. "Well, Sir Joshua," he asked, "and who have you got to dine with you to-day? for the last time I dined at your house the assembly was of such a sort that by God I believe all the rest of the world were at peace for that afternoon at least." "The observation," adds Northcote with delightful *naïveté*, "was by no means ill-applied, for as Sir Joshua's companions were chiefly composed of men of genius they were often disputatious and apt to be vehement in argument."

It is perhaps not superfluous to quote from a well-known account given by Courtenay of these famous dinners:—

"There was something singular in the style and economy of Sir Joshua's table that contributed to pleasantry and good-humour—a coarse, inelegant plenty, without any regard to order and arrangement. A table prepared for seven or eight was often compelled to contain fifteen or sixteen. When this pressing difficulty was got over, a deficiency of knives and forks, plates and glasses succeeded. The attendance was in the same style; and it was absolutely necessary to call instantly for beer, bread, and wine that you might be sup-

plied before the first course was over. He was once prevailed on to furnish the table with decanters and glasses at dinner, to save time and prevent the tardy manœuvres of two or three occasional undisciplined domestics. As these accelerating utensils were demolished in the course of service, Sir Joshua could never be persuaded to replace them. But these trifling embarrassments only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment.

"The wine, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to, nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amidst this convivial, animated bustle amongst his guests, our host sat perfectly composed, always attentive to what was said, never minding what was eat or drank, but left every one at perfect liberty to scramble for himself. Temporal and spiritual peers, physicians, lawyers, actors and musicians composed the motley group and played their parts without dissonance or discord.

"At four o'clock precisely dinner was served, whether all the invited guests were arrived or not. Sir Joshua was never so fashionably ill-bred as to wait an hour, perhaps, for two or three persons of rank or title, and put the rest of the company out of humour by this invidious distinction."

With so much by way of preface, I proceed to Northcote's string of anecdotes, which I print as

he wrote them, disconnectedly. He begins with Garrick.

"Sir Joshua had it in contemplation to have painted an extensive composition in the display of Garrick's merits as a player. The principal figure was to have been a full-length of Mr. Garrick in his own character in the action of speaking a prologue, surrounded by groups of figures representing him in all the different characters in which he had gained fame by personating them on the stage. I heard him describe this scheme to Garrick while he was sitting for his portrait, who received it with demonstrations of delight, saying, 'Ah, that will be the very thing. The only way, by G——, that I can be handed down to posterity.' However, this picture was never even begun. I suppose Sir Joshua saw on consideration that it never could have been made a good picture."

(A passage in the little-known memoir prefixed to the second series of "Fables" is worth quoting here. It is an extract from Northcote's letter to his brother, dated February, 1773.

"I went on Wednesday evening to see Garrick act Hamlet, but I could not get any place better than the two-shilling gallery; but from that I saw enough to be delighted beyond all bounds. But

to praise him is so threadbare that it is ridiculous ; yet I must say the excess of grace in all his actions quite amazed me ; and he looked so young and was so nimble when compared to his appearance when he came here in an old great-coat, for he begins to grow quite an old man.")

"Once while David Garrick sat to Sir Joshua for his portrait, I being as usual at work in the next room, was much amused by the lively conversation of Garrick, who related his having sat for his portrait to some indifferent painter who worked on it till he had drawn in the face correctly, when Garrick took an opportunity while the painter looked another way totally to change his countenance and expression. When the painter patiently worked on to alter his picture and make it like what he then saw, Garrick saw the alteration being made by the simple painter, caught another opportunity and changed to a third character. When the poor tantalised painter perceived this, he threw down his palette and pencils in great rage, saying he believed he was painting from the devil and would do no more.

"As a contrast to the foregoing anecdote of Garrick I remember that Mrs. Yates, the famous tragedian, when she sat to Sir Joshua Reynolds for her portrait for Lady Scarsdale, said to him : 'I

always think upon the same subject when I sit to you, Sir Joshua, as I shall by that means be most likely to preserve the same kind of expression and countenance for you.'

"Sir Joshua was so remarkable for giving in his portraits the true character of the person he painted, that I remember Fuseli once looking at one of Sir Joshua's portraits, said, 'This is not a mere portrait, but it is the history or life of the person.' This praise was no more than strict justice.

"I remember a lady of eminent abilities, of a very proud, bad temper, although handsome, once saying to me, 'I should be afraid to sit for my portrait to Sir Joshua Reynolds, because he draws out so much of the real character of the person he paints.'"

(Mrs. Yates made an unsuccessful *début* at Dublin in 1753; she was then Mrs. Graham. She appeared at Drury Lane in 1754 with no better success till she married Yates the actor and improved under his tuition so much as to succeed to Mrs. Cibber in public favour. "She and Mrs. Crawford were for several years," says Genest, "the two great tragic actresses until Mrs. Siddons eclipsed them." She and her husband (a comic actor) were close friends of Goldsmith, and it was she who spoke the Monody on Garrick in 1779.

Mrs. Yates died in 1787. Lady Scarsdale was her friend and patroness.)

"The earnest desire which Sir Joshua had to render his work perfect to the utmost of his ability, and in each succeeding instance to surpass the former, occasioned his frequently making them inferior to what they had been in the course of their process, and when it was observed to him, that probably he never had sent out to the world any one of his paintings in as perfect a state as it had sometime been, he answered that the remark was very just; he thought so himself; but that he was sure he gained ground by it upon the whole and improved himself by the experiment.

"With the same earnest wish to advance himself in his art, I have heard him say that when every new sitter came to him for a portrait he always began it with a determination to make it the best picture he had ever painted. He would not allow it to be an excuse to say the subject was a bad one to make a picture from. There was always nature, he observed, which if well treated was full sufficient to the purpose.

"Sunday morning was always a kind of public levee at Garrick's house, where you might meet at times with all the most illustrious characters of the nation. On one of those public mornings Ben

Wilson, the eminent electrician and portrait painter, attended and took in his hand his little daughter, telling her beforehand that he would give her the sight of the greatest stage-player in the world. But when they were in the room in the midst of this splendid company, the child ran up to her father, and with an audible voice that all could hear said, 'Father, father, be all these folks here all stage-players?'"

(Benjamin Wilson was born at Leeds in 1721. He succeeded Hogarth as sergeant painter to the Court, and perpetrated a good many historical canvases. His interest in electrical science gained him election to the Royal Society, and he published a work on experiments and observations in electricity.)

"One morning when Garrick paid a visit to Sir Joshua Reynolds I overheard him, as I was then working in the adjoining room. He was speaking with great freedom of Cumberland the author, and condemned his dramatic works. I remember his expression was this—'Damn his dish-clout face! His plays would never do for the stage if I did not cook them up and make epilogues and prologues too for him, and so they go down with the public.' He also added, 'He hates you, Sir Joshua, because

you do not admire his Correggio.' 'What Correggio?' answered Sir Joshua. 'Why, his Correggio,' replied Garrick, 'is Romney the painter.'"

Richard Cumberland (1732–1811), the greatest luminary of the *comédie larmoyante* which Goldsmith put out of fashion, is chiefly remembered by the casual allusions of his rivals. Sheridan pilloried him as Sir Fretful Plagiary in the *Critic;* Goldsmith wrote a character of him in *Retaliation* in verse, which conceals sharp irony under the guise of compliment :—

> "Here Cumberland lies, having acted his parts,
> The Terence of England, the mender of hearts;
> A flattering painter who made it his care
> To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.
> His gallants are all faultless, his women divine,
> And comedy wonders at being so fine!
> Like a tragedy queen he has dizen'd her out,
> Or rather like tragedy giving a rout."

That, no doubt, is why out of his forty or fifty plays not one survives, and few people even know by name the *West Indian*, which was accounted his masterpiece.

The following story shows Goldsmith's real feelings towards this gentleman who drew so many virtuous and insipid characters—so Goldsmith hints—from himself.

"One day when I was at dinner with Sir Joshua, Goldsmith, and Johnson, a poem by Cumberland was presented to Sir Joshua by his servant from the author. Goldsmith immediately laid hold of it and began to read it, and at every line cut almost through the paper with the nail of his finger, crying out, 'What damned nonsense!' till Sir Joshua caught it out of his hand saying, 'No, no, don't do so, you shall not spoil my book neither.'

"I remember when Mrs. Garrick sat for her portrait to Sir Joshua, I was employed in painting in the adjoining room, and heard her making a bitter complaint against Foote the comedian for his perpetual abuse and satire upon Garrick, both in the public papers and in private companies. Sir Joshua replied that it ought not to give her pain, as it evidently proved Foote to be the inferior, as it was always the lesser man who descended to envy and abuse.

"It is said of Goldsmith that he was remarkably vain and ever desirous of being the object of attention. He was often misunderstood, as the following anecdote may serve to prove. On a summer's excursion he accompanied Mrs. Horneck and her two beautiful daughters into France and Flanders, and often pretended to be angry that more attention was paid them than to himself. On their entering a town the populace surrounded the door

of the hotel at which they alighted and testified a desire to see those beautiful young women, and the ladies, willing to gratify them, came into a balcony at the front of the house and Goldsmith with them, but soon perceiving that it was not himself who was the object of admiration he presently withdrew himself with signs of mortification, saying, 'There are places where I am the object of admiration also.' This circumstance is not true as to the vanity of Goldsmith; he said it in a joke and with laughter."

This last important qualifying sentence is for some reason omitted when the passage is reproduced in the Life of Sir Joshua; it is pleasant to be able to put such a misrepresentation in its true light.

The Hornecks belonged to an old Devonshire family and became known to Goldsmith through Sir Joshua Reynolds. The eldest daughter, Catherine, whom Goldsmith nicknamed "Little Comedy," was already engaged to Mr. H. W. Bunbury when the acquaintance began. Mary, the youngest, whom Goldsmith used to call the "Jessamy Bride," married Colonel Gwyn, though not till after the poet's death. Two charming passages in Hazlitt refer to her. The first is in the seventh "Conversation":—

"He (Northcote) was here interrupted by the

entrance of the beautiful Mrs. Gwyn, beautiful even in years. She said she had brought him a book to look at. She could not stop, for she had a lady waiting for her below, but she would call in some morning and have a long chat. After she was gone, I remarked how handsome she still was; and he said, 'I don't know why she is so kind as to come, except that I am the last link in the chain that connects her with all those she most esteemed when she was young—Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith—and remind her of the most delightful period of her life.'

"I said, 'Not only so, but you remember what she was at twenty; and you thus bring back to her the triumphs of her youth—that pride of beauty which must be the more fondly cherished as it has no external vouchers, and lives chiefly in the bosom of its once lovely possessor. In her, however, the Graces had triumphed over time; she was one of Ninon de l'Enclos' people, of the list of the immortals. I could almost fancy the shade of Goldsmith in the room, looking round with complacency.'

"'Yes,' said Northcote, 'that is what Sir Joshua used to mention as the severest test of beauty—it was not then *skin-deep* only. She had gone through all the stages and had lent a grace to each.'"

The other is a tribute to Goldsmith.

"'Mrs. Gwyn,' said Northcote, talking of the

authenticity of relics, 'had certainly a lock of Goldsmith's hair, for she and her sister had wished to have some remembrance of him after his death; and though the coffin was nailed up it was opened again at their request (such was the regard which Goldsmith was known to have for them) and a lock of his hair was cut off, which Mrs. Gwyn still has.'"

Another story which puts Goldsmith in a dignified and honourable light is the following:—

"About this period" (*i.e.*, of Northcote's apprenticeship) "Sir Joshua painted a very fine portrait of Dr. James Beattie, from which there is a very good print taken. In this picture I painted the drapery. It is an allegorical picture. The Doctor is represented in his gown as Doctor of Laws, with his volume on the Immutability of Truth under his arm. The Angel of Truth is beating down the vices Envy, Falsehood, &c., which are represented by a group of figures flying off at his approach, and the principal head in this group is made an exact likeness of Voltaire. When Dr. Goldsmith saw this he reproved Sir Joshua for so doing with some degree of anger, saying: 'It very ill becomes a man of your eminence and character, Sir Joshua, to condescend to be so mean a flatterer or to wish to degrade so

high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a subject, as Dr. Beattie and his book together in the space of ten years will not be known to have ever had existence, but your picture and Voltaire will live for ever to your disgrace as a flatterer.'"

(In the MSS. Life Northcote adds a great many details as to Beattie, who was esteemed, he says, by Reynolds rather for his virtues than his talents. The honorary degree which entitles Dr. Beattie to wear the gown in which he is represented was conferred at the same time on Sir Joshua at Oxford.)

"Dr. Goldsmith was once in a large company, one of whom was Mr. Michael Moser, the Swiss, who was a Royal Academician, and was made keeper of the Academy at its institution. When Dr. Goldsmith was talking with fluent vivacity and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present, Mr. Moser, who sat next to him, perceiving that Dr. Johnson, who was also amongst them, began to roll himself, as if he was about to speak, suddenly stopped Dr. Goldsmith's harangue, saying: 'Stop, stop! Toctor Shonson is going to say something.' Moser spoke in this manner, not being able to pronounce the English properly. This interruption was very mortifying to Goldsmith,

and he could not stifle his indignation to be thus set down with such contempt below the man he beheld with envy.

"When Dr. Goldsmith's comedy of 'She Stoops to Conquer' was to be brought on the stage, he was undetermined what name to give it to the very last hour; he then in great haste gave it the name of 'She Stoops to Conquer; or, The Mistakes of a Night.' Sir Joshua offered a much better name, saying, 'You should call it "The Belle's Stratagem"—if you do not I will damn it'; but he chose to name it himself. Mrs. Cowley has since given that name to one of her comedies.

"I attended the first night of this play of Dr. Goldsmith's with great anxiety for its success, as Goldsmith was then in great need, and all his hopes depended on this event. The actors had great doubts of its success, but contrary to their expectations the play was received with great applause. Goldsmith's anxiety was so great that at the dinner preceding the representation of this play his mouth became parched to that degree he was unable to swallow his meat."

Northcote adds, in the Life of Sir Joshua: "I recollect that Dr. Goldsmith gave me an order soon after this, with which I went to see the comedy; and the next time I saw him he inquired

of me what my opinion was of it. I told him that I would not presume to be a judge of its merits. He asked, 'Did it make you laugh?' I answered, 'Exceedingly.' 'Then,' said the Doctor, 'that is all I require.'"

"About the year 1770 Dr. Goldsmith lost his mother, who died in Ireland. On this occasion he immediately dressed himself in a suit of clothes of gray cloth trimmed with black, or what is called second mourning, and when he appeared after this at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, Miss Reynolds, the sister, asked him who of his family he had lost, as she saw he wore mourning, when he answered, 'Only a distant relation,' being ashamed, as I suppose, to own that he wore such slight mourning for so near a relative. This appears in him a kind of Irish bull in wearing such a dress, as in the eyes of all those who did not know his mother or of her death it was totally unnecessary to wear mourning at all, and to all such who knew of his mother's death it would appear to be not the proper dress; so that he satisfied nobody and displeased some. Miss Reynolds thought it very brutish in him to call his mother a distant relation.

"When Dr. Goldsmith died, Miss Reynolds, Sir Joshua's sister, said to Dr. Johnson, 'I am sincerely sorry for poor Dr. Goldsmith; he was every man's

friend.' 'No, madam,' replied Johnson, 'he was no man's friend.'

"Sir Joshua was much affected at the death of Goldsmith, and did no work for that whole day (extraordinary for him who passed 'no day without a line'). He managed all the affairs as his executor. He had him buried in the plainest and most private manner, observing that the most pompous burials are soon forgot, and that he would apply what money could be got to a more lasting memorial; and accordingly got a monument for him, made by Nollekens, placed in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, and fixed upon the place for it himself where it now stands over the door.

"That Dr. Johnson had very little knowledge of what constitutes the excellence of the drama, those who have heard him converse on the subject would soon be convinced without referring to that eminent proof, his tragedy of 'Irene.'

"One day when dining at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where also were Dr. Goldsmith and myself, Otway's exquisite tragedy of 'Venice Preserved' was the subject of conversation, when Johnson, in his peremptory manner, pronounced that there was not forty good lines to be found in the whole play, Goldsmith asserted that, notwithstanding, it was of

all tragedies the one nearest equal to Shakespeare. 'Poh!' said Johnson, 'What stuff in these lines!—

> "'"What feminine tales
> Hast thou been listening too of unair'd shirts,
> Catarrhs and toothache got by thin-sol'd shoes?"

"'True,' said Goldsmith; 'to be sure that is very like to Shakespeare.'

"McArdell, the mezzotinto engraver, having taken a very good print from the portrait of Rubens, came to Sir Joshua Reynolds one morning to make inquiry if he could inform him of the various titles to which Rubens had a right, saying he believed he had been knighted by the Kings of France, Spain, and England, and was Secretary of State in Flanders and to the Privy Council in Spain, and employed in a ministerial capacity from the Court of Madrid to the Court of London to negotiate a treaty of peace between the two Crowns. Dr. Johnson happened to be in the room with Sir Joshua at the time, and understanding McArdell's inquiry, interfered rather abruptly, saying, 'Poh, poh! put his name alone under the print, "Peter Paul Rubens"; that is full sufficient, and more than all the rest.'

"This advice from the Doctor was accordingly followed.

"Dr. Johnson knew nothing of the art of paint-

ing; he had indeed very bad sight. One day at dinner at Sir Joshua's with several painters, one of whom was I, in the course of conversation Richardson's treatise on painting happened to be mentioned. 'Ah,' said Johnson, 'I remember when I was at college I by chance found that book on my stairs. I took it with me to my chamber, and read it through, and truly I did not think that it was possible to say so much upon the art.' Sir Joshua, who could not hear distinctly, said to me, who sat next him: 'What does he say?' I repeated it, when Johnson, overhearing it, said to me: 'I did not wish, young gentleman, that you should have repeated to him what I then said.'

"Most persons must remember the lines by Mr. Pope which began thus—

> "'Come, gentle Air, th' Æolian Shepherd said,
> While Procris panted in the secret shade.'

These verses he sent to Miss Blount, accompanied with a fan, on which he had painted Procris, with the motto 'Aura Veni.'

"After the death of Miss Blount this fan, with the other effects, were sold by public auction, and Sir Joshua Reynolds sent a person to bid for the fan as far as thirty guineas, but the man who was entrusted with this commission mistook the marked

catalogue and thought it could mean no more than thirty shillings, as that seemed to be a full price for a fan, and as it sold for about two pounds he lost the purchase. However, as it was bought by a dealer in toys, Sir Joshua got it by giving him a reasonable profit on his bargain. It was afterwards stolen from him.

"On inquiring of Sir Joshua about the degree of skill with which it was painted, he replied that it was such as might be expected from one who only painted for his amusement, like the work of a child, as must be the case when it is only taken up from idleness and put aside when they are tired. But those who were determined to excel must go to work, willing or unwilling, morning, noon, and night, and would find it to be no play, but very hard labour.' This was said to his pupil, and it was in this mode only that he ever gave instruction when accident produced an opportunity to give it.

"Sir Joshua used to relate a circumstance thus: When he first came to London, at the age of eighteen, and was placed as the scholar of Hudson, the portrait painter, he was sent by his master to a sale of pictures. As it was a collection of some eminence the room was vastly crowded, and young Reynolds was at the upper end near the auctioneer, when he heard a considerable bustle at the further

end of the room near the door, which he could not at first account for, but thought somebody had fainted as the crowd was great. However, he soon heard the name of 'Mr. Pope!' 'Mr. Pope!' echoed from every mouth, and all drew back to make a lane for Mr. Pope to pass, and every person as he passed them on each side held out their hands for him to take. Sir Joshua Reynolds, although not in the front row, gave out his hand under the arm of the man who stood before him, and Pope took it in his, and this he did to all he passed. This was the only time that Reynolds ever saw this great poet.

"Pity that Pope had but known the future importance of the hand he then received in his. This, perhaps, like Elijah, who caught the mantle of the prophet as he flew up to heaven, imparted genius into the hand it touched.

"I have heard Sir Joshua relate an anecdote not unnecessary to be known to painters, which was this :—

"When Richardson the painter was a young man, in discourse with a very ancient lady whose portrait he was painting, she happened to mention that when she was a young girl about seventeen she had sat for her portrait to Vandyke. This of course roused the painter Richardson's curiosity

to ask a thousand particulars, many unimportant. However, the part which seemed of most consequence in his information was this : She said she well remembered that the pictures of Vandyke at that period when she sat to him had a raw and white appearance, and were not of that mellowness which, judging by their present appearance, time alone must have added to them.

" I remember Sir Joshua Reynolds used to relate the circumstance that himself, accompanied by Roubiliac, the famous sculptor, paid a visit to Dr. Johnson when he lived in Gough Square. Their business was to get him to write an epitaph for a monument for Westminster Abbey which Roubiliac, who had never till that time been introduced to Johnson, was then engaged in making. Johnson received them civilly and took them up a great many stairs to what he considered as his library, in which, beside his books, all covered with dust, was an old crazy deal table and a worse and older elbow chair having only three legs. In this Johnson seated himself, after having with great apparent practice and dexterity drawn it up against the wall, which served to support it on that side on which the leg was deficient. Then he took his pen and ink and demanded what it was they wanted him to write. On this Roubiliac, who was a true French-

man, as may be seen by his public works, began a most bombastic and ridiculous display of what he thought should be the species of epitaph which the Doctor might correctly set down for him. Johnson, who could not well bear that any one should dictate to him, cut short his speech by replying in an angry tone of voice, 'Come, come, sir, let us have no more of this ridiculous bombast rodomontade, but let me know in simple language the name, character, and quality of the person whose epitaph you intend to have me write.'"

(Roubiliac was a native of Lyons, who migrated to this country about 1730. He did many portrait busts, including the well-known head of Swift, and several of his figure compositions are in Westminster Abbey. He died in 1762, so this story must have been ten years old by the time Northcote heard it.)

"A young gentleman, nephew to the Lady Frances Elliott, who was bred to the Bar, having a great desire to be in company with Dr. Johnson, was in consequence invited by Miss Reynolds to meet him one evening at Sir Joshua's house, when they soon fell into deep conversation on politics and the different governments in Europe, and particularly that of Venice. Miss Reynolds, who related the anecdote, said that as it was a subject which she neither liked or understood she had not

attended to their conversation, but the young man was humbly making his inquiries to gain all possible information from the profound knowledge of Dr. Johnson, when suddenly her attention was attracted by hearing the Doctor in a very loud and peremptory tone of voice say, 'Yes, sir, I know very well that all Republican rascals think as you do.'

"One day when Dr. Johnson dined at Sir Joshua's in private, there being no company except Miss Reynolds, sister to Sir Joshua, the conversation turned on morality, when Sir Joshua said that he did not think that in the world there was any man that was completely wicked. Johnson said, 'I do not know what you mean by completely wicked.' 'I mean,' said Sir Joshua, 'a man lost to all sense of shame.' Dr. Johnson replied that to be completely wicked a man must also be lost to all sense of conscience. Sir Joshua said he thought it was exactly the same; he could see no difference. 'What?' said Johnson, 'no difference? Can you see no difference? I am ashamed to hear you or anybody utter such nonsense, when the one relates to men only, the other to God.' Miss Reynolds said that when shame was lost the other was very nearly gone. Johnson said, 'Your conclusion is very just.'

"Dr. Johnson, in company with Sir Joshua and his sister, paid a visit one afternoon to drink tea at

the Miss Cotterills', daughters of Admiral Cotterill, ladies who lived in much fashion. Johnson, according to his constant custom, was most shabbily and slovenly dressed. By chance they were let in at the door by a maidservant who did not know Johnson, although a frequent visitor at the house. Johnson was the last of the three that came in, when the maid, seeing his slovenly figure, did not think he was one of the company, and laid hold of him just as he was going upstairs, and pulled him back again, saying, 'You fellow, what is your business here? I suppose you intend to rob the house.' This most unlucky accident threw the poor Doctor into such a fit of anger and shame that he roared out like a bull and could with great difficulty articulate only to say, 'What have I done? What have I done?' Nor could he recover himself for the remainder of the evening.

"Johnson once being in company with Herbert Croft, their conversation was on certain new publications of Croft's. The Doctor said, 'I know, Croft, you always had the itch of writing, but did you ever know this itch was to be cured by scratching?'"

Mr. (afterwards Sir) Herbert Croft wrote a Life of Young, which Johnson revised and prefixed to his work upon that poet. It was this composition

which Boswell praised to Burke as a happy imitation of Johnson's manner, and drew from him the famous remark, "No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson; it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength." To which, after a pause (as Boswell remarks) he added with exquisite felicity, "It has all the contortions of the Sibyll without the inspiration."

"Miss Hannah More and other ladies being in company with Dr. Johnson, it was remarked by one of them that learned women were by no means a rare thing in the present age, when Johnson said, 'I have known a great many ladies who understood Latin, but very few who understood English.'

"A lady said that women surpassed men in literary correspondence. Johnson said he did not know that. 'At least,' said the lady, 'they are most pleasing in conversation.' 'No, madam; I think they are most pleasing when they hold their tongues.'

"A dull companion was making a long discourse to Johnson of the Punic War, in which he gave nothing either new or entertaining. 'I soon withdrew my attention, sir,' said Johnson, 'and thought of Tom Thumb.'"

"It was one of Sir Joshua's favourite maxims,"

says Northcote in the Life, "that all the gestures of children are graceful, and that distortion commences with the introduction of the dancing-master. A circumstance which he used to relate bears out this view. He was once in company of a party of ladies and gentlemen, viewing a nobleman's house; they passed through a gallery of portraits, when a little girl who belonged to one of the party attracted the particular attention of Sir Joshua by her vivacity and the drollery of her keen observation on each picture. For when the company stopped to look at each particular portrait the child, unconscious of being observed by any of them, would by her actions imitate the air of the head and awkward position of the ill-drawn limbs of each with such innocence and true feeling that it was the most just and incontrovertible criticism that could be made on the picture. Observation of this was made by Sir Joshua alone; the child's actions passed unnoticed by the rest of the party. This instance serves to prove that those parts of the arts which are most essential and the most difficult to accomplish with tolerable success—namely, grace, ease of attitudes, and expression—are qualities which are open to the knowledge and judgment of the most simple and untaught persons, more so than to half-taught connoisseurs.

"The distinction between true politeness of manner and the affectation of it was clearly given by Sir Joshua in the instance of two noblemen to whom he paid a morning visit on Sunday. The first that he paid his respects to received him with extraordinary affected condescension, and seemed very desirous to please, talked to him the whole time on nothing but his art, in order to give him a fair opportunity to show himself off to the best advantage, and observed to him that he had requested the pleasure of the visit on a Sunday that he might not occasion his losing his time, which on other days could be so much better employed.

"After taking leave of this nobleman he paid his next visit to another—I think it was to Lord Chesterfield—who, unlike the first, received him with the same freedom as if he had been his equal in rank, never once spoke upon the subject of art, nor observed that Sunday was the day of rest for the labourers, but discoursed with him on the news and occurrences of the day, and such other topics as a gentleman of education is supposed to be acquainted with, and no word escaped him that denoted his recollection of any difference in their situation in life.'

"Sir Joshua used to say that something else besides good sense was required to make a good

painter, for Allan Ramsay was a man of remarkable good sense yet not a good painter."

Ramsay (son of the author of the "Gentle Shepherd") studied in Italy, and was painter-in-ordinary to George III. There is an interesting reference to him in the "Conversations."

"His manner," said Northcote, "was dry and timid. He stopped short in the middle of his work because he knew exactly how much it wanted. Now and then we find hints and sketches which show what he might have been if his hand had been equal to his conceptions. I have seen a picture of his of the Queen soon after she was married—a profile and slightly done, but it was a paragon of elegance. She had a fan in her hand—Lord! how she held that fan! It was weak in execution and ordinary in features. All I can say of it is that it was the farthest possible removed from everything like vulgarity. A professor might despise it; but in the mental part I have never seen anything of Vandyke's equal to it. . . . Reynolds would have finished it better; the other was afraid of spoiling what he had done, and so left it a mere outline. He was frightened before he was hurt."

CHAPTER IV

NORTHCOTE LEAVES SIR JOSHUA'S HOUSE, AND SETS UP FOR HIMSELF. HIS JOURNEY TO ITALY

"I CONTINUED with Sir Joshua near five years, most of which time I spent in making copies from my master's pictures for him or painting his draperies ; and whenever I could gain a little time from those employments I painted heads from the life for my improvement as a portrait painter, but the hours I could gain were few. I now thought it proper to practice for myself, and therefore determined to quit Sir Joshua, especially as I learnt by experience that much time is lost in useless employment by those who are under the control of a master. For masters commonly consult their own interests more than the advancement of their scholars, besides its being a situation subject to a thousand inconveniences which may be felt but are difficult to describe, and to show this in some degree I will transcribe a part of one of my letters to my brother.

"I find it very displeasing to Sir Joshua for any one to come to me in any of the rooms in which I paint, so that all the day I must live like a hermit, which I submit to as I wish to oblige him in everything that is in my power. Thus every visitor by day is attended with great inconvenience to me on many accounts which I could better explain to you were we together; for those reasons I would not have you encourage D—— to call often on me or think of chatting. I hope this will not appear harsh in me; I should be very glad to see my friends if I could any way with propriety do it. But all those things I must quite give up. Give my love to J——, &c., but do not let them know what I have written.

"The only place in which I can receive any person without Sir Joshua's knowledge is such a room as I am mortified for anybody to see me in; and all the other rooms he constantly frequents.

"Dawson, when he called on me, was very desirous of seeing the room in which I worked, and I led him into the dismal hole, but it mortified me, and I was not able to take him into any other at that time.

"London, *February* 23, 1775."

Northcote places here the record of a compliment on which he valued himself highly.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds commonly painted the hands and drapery in his pictures from his scholars. One morning, when I was sitting to Sir Joshua for this purpose, Edmund Burke came into the room to pay a visit to Sir Joshua, when, seeing me sitting in the chair, he said: 'This gentleman is not only a painter, but he is also like a picture by Titian!'

"I relate this trifling anecdote as it tends to give some idea of my person, or at least how my appearance struck so *sagacious* a man as the eminent Mr. Burke."

Hazlitt, telling this story in the "Conversations," adds that Northcote, then a young man, was sitting for one of the children in Count Ugolino.

We now come to the critical period at which the young painter struck out for himself.

"The latter end of the year 1775 was now arrived, when it only wanted a few months of five years that I had been with Sir Joshua. I had also arrived to the twenty-ninth year of my age, and it was high time that I should do something for myself, as thus far past youth must be considered as a very late period in the life of a scholar; for Sir Joshua used to say of himself when very young, that if he did not prove to be the best painter of his time when he arrived at the age of thirty years he never should be; but he accomplished it.

"It is also to be considered that as my time was entirely taken up in assisting my master it was out of my power to get any support for myself in all this time. I therefore determined to quit London and try my fortune in the country, having had a most pressing invitation to go down to Portsmouth from my friend Mr. Hunt, at that time Master Builder of the Dockyard there and afterwards Surveyor of the Navy. I accepted this invitation, and accordingly thought it most proper to give Sir Joshua notice of my intentions some months previous to my intended departure. This was a task very disagreeable to me, and it was deferred from day to day. But at last I summoned up courage, and going to him one morning in the month of December, when he was alone in his painting-room, I began by saying that at the end of next May it would be five years since I first came to his house. Sir Joshua with a smile said he thought that was long enough, and that I was now well able to do for myself.

"I then said I was very sensible of the great obligation I owed him, and that I would stay any time longer he should think proper if I could be of any service to him, when Sir Joshua said, 'By no means, you have done enough already.' I then said I feared I had not been of so much use to him as I wished, but that it was solely from want of power

and not inclination. Sir Joshua answered that I had been very useful; more so than any that had ever been with him, and, continued he, 'I hope we shall assist each other as long as we live,' and added that if I would remain with him until May he should be obliged to me, as it would be very useful. I answered that I intended it, and during that time wished to work as much as it was in my power for his service; and thus the conversation ended.

"About the 12th of May, 1776, I took leave of Sir Joshua Reynolds in order to go to Portsmouth, when we parted with great cordiality, and Sir Joshua told me I was perfectly right in what I did, and that he was fully satisfied with my conduct, as he had no idea I would have stayed with him so long. 'But now,' added Sir Joshua, 'to succeed in art you are to remember that something more must be done than that which was needed formerly. Kneller, Lilly, and Hudson will not do now.'

"This speech sounded like a desire to give an impression of his own superior power to those painters he had named, especially as he had joined the former two with Hudson, who was so evidently their inferior out of all comparison.

"I was now to quit that house in which I had spent so many happy hours, and although perfectly satisfied in my own mind that what I did in this

respect was right, and that it was high time for me to be acting on the stage of life for myself, yet it was impossible to leave that spot, which was the constant resort of the learned, the wise, the virtuous, and the eminent without an inward regret.

"Having, as I before said, accepted the invitation of my friend Mr. Hunt, I accordingly set out from London for Portsmouth, where I continued till the September following, painting all the family of the Hunts and many persons in that neighbourhood at the price of five guineas a-head.

"During my stay at Portsmouth I was most earnestly invited to go to the Isle of Wight, where I remained a fortnight and painted two very good heads of the Rev. Mr. Holmes (since made Lord Holmes) and his lady, who paid me the utmost attention and civility, and took me to every part of the island wherever there was anything curious to be seen, and at last parted from me with regret.

"From Portsmouth I wrote a letter to my friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds, acquainting him of my success, and received the following answer :—

"*To Mr. Northcote.*

"London, *September* 3, 1776.

"Dear Sir,—I am very much obliged to you for your kind remembrance of me, and am very glad to hear of your great success, which you very well

deserve, and I have no doubt but you will meet with the same encouragement when you come to settle in London, which I hope you do not forget. Here is the place where you must think of settling up yourself after you have made a short trip (at least) to Italy, which your success at Portsmouth and Plymouth will enable you to accomplish. If I can ever be of any service to you you know you may command me.

"I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

"Josiua Reynolds.

"I beg when you write to Mrs. Northcote you would thank her for her present."

"From Portsmouth I went to visit my friends at Plymouth, where I met with full employment in painting portraits at the price of five guineas a-head, and might have continued there much longer than I did with equal success, for I left it in the midst of solicitations from those who wished to have had their portraits painted by me, and many were much displeased at being refused. There had been none but the meanest painters in that part of the world for many years before; my works therefore, even at that time, struck my employers with surprise and wonder.

"My immediate predecessor in that place in art was Anthony Poggi, an Italian, who had been

recommended by Sir Joshua Reynolds as a drawing-master there. He painted portraits very indifferently, and had enraged his sitters, especially the ladies, as much as if he had really made them in their own persons as ugly as he had made their portraits. This seemed to be carrying their anger too far, and when I next saw Sir Joshua I related to him the ill-will Poggi had incurred from the ladies, as if he had transformed themselves into ugliness.

"'Why, you know,' said Sir Joshua, 'he has given it under his hand that they are so.'"

This story is told in the Life of Reynolds, but without the name of Signor Poggi—a painter of whom I find no mention in Bryan. Northcote met his father, Angelo Poggi (equally unknown), in Parma. These journeymen painters handed on their trade from father to son, like any other skilled mechanics.

"The great object with me was to visit Italy as soon as possible, in hopes to make myself more able in my profession by seeing and studying the works of the ancient masters. I determined, therefore, to give up this prospect of present profit, and, on the contrary, to spend towards my improvement in the art that money which I had now gained by it, being between four and five hundred pounds.

"Accordingly I left Plymouth on the 31st of March, 1777, and set out on my journey to Italy, being desirous of taking the opportunity of going in company of my friend and townsman, Captain Orlando Manly, of the train of artillery, who was then going to join his regiment at Minorca. It was rather sooner than I wished to go, but as I knew nothing of the customs, habits, or even the language of any country I was to pass through, it was necessary I should go in company with some one who did. We embarked from Brighthelmstone (Brighton) and landed at Dieppe.

"On our journey of course we took Paris in our way, remaining there ten days, which we spent in visiting and viewing most of the principal objects worthy of observation in the metropolis of that polished nation.

"Our first Sunday in Paris was destined to see sights all of which to me were as new as delightful, and this proved the most pleasant day I spent in that city; and no wonder.

"To a mind thirsting after knowledge, to me who had never till then been beyond the limits of my own country, a new kingdom seemed a new world, and filled my imagination with delight; and the novelty gave an interest and value to all I saw.

"The first thing was to go and see the Royal Palace of Versailles and the King and Queen of

France dine in public. But to this there was a little difficulty started ; the Court were in mourning for the late King of Portugal, and my small wardrobe would furnish no such dress. This was an obstacle which in France can be overcome at much less expense than in England, for I presently hired from a tailor a full Court dress of black, with a sword and bag to my hair ; and Captain Orlando had his regimentals. Thus equipped, we set off in our chariot for the Court.

"The beautiful Queen was then in the zenith of her glory, had just ascended the throne, was young, gay, and infinitely graceful ; she fascinated with delight all who beheld her. At that moment it would have been difficult for imagination to have conceived a change so great as a very few years effected : that this youthful Queen, appearing the object of adoration of her surrounding and splendid courtiers, when a murmur of disapprobation would have been treason, in so short a space of time after should have been dragged from a loathsome dungeon and murdered on a scaffold.

"One day was spent in viewing the royal abbey of St. Denis, the burial-place of the Kings of France, in which was many fine tombs, besides a curious and most valuable treasury of plate and jewels. At this time the King's aunt was a nun in this abbey.

"In Paris I was also regaled with the sight of those grand collections of art which were in the galleries of the Luxembourg and Orleans, besides several collections of less note.

"On Sunday afternoon, being the 20th of April, I and my friend took leave of Paris and set out for the city of Lyons, where we arrived on Friday, the 25th of the same month, having spent a day to see the palace of Fontainebleau.

"At Lyons we remained some days, and here my friend parted from me, going to Marseilles, in order to embark for Minorca."

It may not be superfluous to remark that Minorca became a British possession by the Treaty of Utrecht, and remained so (with a brief interval of capture by France) till it was restored to Spain in 1783.

"On the day of our separation, being the 1st of May, my friend took leave of me at five o'clock in the morning, but previously he had made the bargain for me with a vetturino, who for nine guineas agreed to take me to Genoa through Turin.

"A vetturino is a man who is master of a small chaise drawn by one horse, which he rides, and his employer has the carriage to himself.

"After my friend had left me at Lyons it was some

1770

time before the vetturino came with his chaise to take me up. The time seemed long, though perhaps not more than half an hour, and this situation, so new to me, appeared very awful. I was without money, having spent my last supply, and my next banker was at Genoa, where the vetturino was to be paid for his journey. I was without language and without a friend, left alone in a foreign country far distant from my home, totally unknown, and without any means of defence against the grossest impositions with which knavery might attack weakness.

"However, I soon began my journey, but as it was the same horse which was to take me to Turin, of course we travelled so slow that it took me six days in getting to that city.

"The first part of the way I passed without uttering a single word, as I knew no language in which I could converse with my conductor.

"The journey appeared to me terrible, without a friend or companion, over the rude and lonely mountains of Savoy. But the chaise-driver seemed to be a man of much humanity, and by his expression of countenance demonstrated much solicitude on account of his forlorn fellow-traveller. Indeed, the man naturally supposed that if by any mishap he had lost his charge on the road, he should most certainly never have got paid for his carriage.

"One day in our journey, passing one of the highest mountains of Savoy before you arrive at Mount Cenis, we were overtaken by a most tremendous storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, insomuch that the poor horse which drew the carriage would not move a step, as if terrified; the rain poured down in torrents, as if thrown out of pails, and the vivid lightning flashed around us as if it would have burnt us to a cinder; no mortal was near, and all shelter was impossible. The poor driver was almost beat into the earth, and, to add to his distress, he discovered that his horse was lame, when he exclaimed, in the most piteous tone of voice, 'Oh, mon Dieu! Oh, mon Dieu!' In this situation we were obliged to remain till such time as the storm was somewhat abated, and then slowly crept on till we quitted the mountain, at the foot of which was a small inn. Here we got our damages repaired, and I dined at a large table filled with Carthusian friars, who were on their journey from all the convents of that Order in the neighbourhood, going to Granoble to elect a General of the Order. The dinner provided for them, though what is called meagre according to the severity of those Orders of monks, was, notwithstanding, both rich and various in the dishes, and was the only dinner I met with on the journey which was too luscious for my stomach. The next day I and my conductor had

to pass Mount Cenis, which was covered with snow. This we did mounted on mules, with mules to carry our baggage, each led by a muleteer; it was not unpleasant, and attended with neither difficulty or danger. The vetturino when on the mountain pulled a night-cap which he had on his head over his eyes, and I, following the example, did the same, concluding there must be some good reason for so doing.

"By this means I saw nothing of the mountain except that when I was on the summit of it the high wind blew my hat off, and then I put up my cap to see what was become of it. The appearance was as if I had been up in the clouds; no distant prospect was to be discovered. When my hat was brought to me I put it on my head, pulled down my cap again, and went on as before."

Imagine the modern artist crossing the Alps with a night-cap pulled over his eyes. But the taste for mountain scenery was still accounted an affectation in 1779.

"On the descent of the mountain I was carried sitting in a kind of large pannier, or hamper made of wicker, on poles, by two men at a time, with others attending to relieve them, as the descent is very steep. Here the objects struck

me as immensely grand, much like those in the landskips of Salvator Rosa, for now I had lifted up my cap to look about me. On every side were huge rocks that looked as if they were about to fall, with vast torrents of water frequently seen beating their impetuous way between them.

"We now arrived at a town which is situate at the foot of Mount Cenis, of which I do not know the name, but it is the first in Piedmont, and slept there that night.

"On the next morning I was accosted by a servant in livery who addressed me in English. 'Sir,' said he, 'my master sends you his best compliments, and begs as a great favour that you would be so obliging as to permit him to come into your carriage, as his own has met with an accident, by which it is so much broken that he cannot go on, and hearing you are alone he hopes you will grant him this favour.' After having been so long without speech, the sound of English was like a voice from heaven to me, and the request would have been as readily granted had it been delivered with much less civility, as I now so much coveted a companion. This proved to be a young clergyman of Ireland who was on his travels. We continued the journey together on to Turin, which made it much more pleasant than the former part had been. We were also joined in company by a young nobleman of

Florence, who was on his return from England, where he had been for the sole purpose, he said, of seeing the ceremonies at the trial of the Duchess of Kingston. He spoke English pretty well, and owned that he had been more particularly induced to undertake the journey to attend this curious trial of a peeress because he thought it would have ended in her being condemned and beheaded, so that he lost half the sight he had promised himself."

Elizabeth Chudleigh, afterwards Countess of Bristol and *soi-disant* Duchess of Kingston, was one of the most notorious beauties of the last century. She came of a good Dorsetshire family and had the fortune to meet Pulteney, afterwards Earl of Bath, by whose influence she became in 1743 maid of honour to Augusta, Princess of Wales. Reynolds, who painted her about this period, told Northcote that he had never seen so delicate a beauty, although in later life she became extremely coarse. The Duke of Hamilton fell in love with her, but there was a quarrel, and in a moment of pique she secretly married Augustus Hervey, Lord Hervey's second son. She lived, however, at Court under her maiden name ; her husband—who was a sailor—soon having quarrelled irretrievably with her. It was in 1751 that she appeared at the masked ball of which Mrs. Montagu writes : " Miss

Chudleigh's dress, or rather undress, was remarkable; she was Iphigenia for the sacrifice, but so naked that the high priest might easily inspect the entrails of the victim. The maids of honour (not of maids the strictest) were so offended they would not speak to her." In 1759 she took a step which proved her undoing. The Earl of Bristol, her brother-in-law, being ill, and her husband likely to succeed, she caused the parson who had officiated at her marriage to enter it in the register. In 1760 she was the recognised mistress of the Duke of Kingston, and in that capacity gave a great ball in honour of the Prince of Wales. Age does not seem to have lessened her fascination, and the Duke was constant. In 1768 she and her husband endeavoured to get rid of the tie, and she swore in court that he had never married her. Next year, being aged forty-nine, she married the Duke, who died in 1770, leaving her all his property. The Duke's nephew and natural heir brought an indictment against her for bigamy. The Italian gentleman who hoped to see her hung was too sanguine ; she was only liable to branding, and this she escaped by pleading her privileges as a peeress. Her gallantries were prolonged even beyond her fascinations, almost till her death, which she met at the age of sixty-eight, in Paris, the year before the Revolution. A good deal of her later life had been passed in Russia, where

she started, appropriately enough, a manufacture of brandy. Foote's sketch of her as Lady Kitty Crocodile in the "Trip to Paris" excited a good deal of notice. She revenged herself by suborning servants to bring infamous accusations against him. The best that can be said for her is that she abounded in the impulsive good-nature which is not uncommon in ladies of the class to which she belonged.

Northcote's narrative proceeds with a characteristic episode.

"When at Turin I was rather alarmed on being informed that the road I had to pass from thence to Genoa was much infested by robbers, for which reason I provided myself with a large pair of horse-pistols; those I bought in that place. I also stayed two days in Turin longer than I had intended for the sake of having a companion, as my late fellow-travellers were not going that way.

"I now set out for Genoa accompanied by an old gentleman of that city, but since he unfortunately was not able to speak one word of English, this journey of three days was rendered exceedingly dull again.

"The horse-pistols which I bought in Turin I carefully posted conspicuously in the front pockets of the chaise so as to appear in sight from the outside; but I remarked that as often as I pulled

them up so as to be seen, in order to intimidate the robbers, if any should attack us (for these tremendous pistols were not charged), the old gentleman always pushed them down again out of sight, which appeared very unaccountable to me, but not being able to converse with my companion I could not inquire his reason for wishing to hide those terrific weapons. But I afterwards was informed that, instead of increasing my security as I intended, and as it would have done in England, I had much increased my danger, as those Italian robbers, who are mostly peasants, when they see you are provided with arms to defend yourself, always shoot at you from some secret covert before you can discover them, as they do not choose to encounter any danger more than absolute necessity requires. This may be remembered as a hint to travellers.

"At Genoa I remained a week, which I spent in seeing whatever might be most worthy of observation in that city. Here I met with Mr. Barron, a young English painter and formerly the scholar of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was now on his return to England."

Barron was the son of a publican in Soho. He exhibited, it is said, many portraits before he died in 1791. Certainly Northcote was justified in the observation (which he made so frequently)

that Reynolds did not succeed in founding a school.

"The road from Genoa to Florence is the very worst in all Italy for a traveller, as the only means of conveyance is on mules or asses, it being impassable by a wheel carriage, as it is wholly mountainous, with frequent and very dangerous precipices, and in this state the Genoese Republic from policy chose to keep it in order to render it more difficult for an enemy's army to attack them on that quarter. This proved a matter of no small inconvenience to me, who chose to take this road to Florence rather than return to Turin by the way I came, though warned of its extreme difficulties and danger.

"I accordingly set out from Genoa, accompanying the Genoese courier, with whom a bargain was made to take me on to Rome. This courier travels night and day without sleeping on the journey. This proved the most fatiguing expedition I had ever experienced, as indeed it had nearly cost me my life.

"On the first night of our journey the courier stopped at the post-house — if it may be called a house, for it was no better than a shed for cattle and such as in England we call a cow-house. It had no chimney belonging to it, but the fire was made in the centre of a large square

bank raised in the middle of the room about the height of a table, and on this bank the company sat round the fire to warm themselves, as the night air was cold; meantime the mules were getting ready. The inside of this hovel was as black with soot as the chimney-back, there being no vent for the smoke but at the door. This served as a specimen of the accommodations to be met with on this road. We now quitted this place and set out on fresh mules in pursuit of our journey; the night was very dark, and the shining nightflies in great plenty floating in the air appeared like so many meteors or little balls of fire continually dropping on the ground before us. It would have proved infinitely more pleasant and much less fatiguing to me had the courier been able to have performed a part of this journey by sea, which is most commonly the case, but unfortunately the weather was too bad to take advantage of that expedient; we were therefore obliged to continue our way over those mountains which are the barrier between Genoa and Florence.

"Those roads, if they may be so called, are the most dangerous in all Italy; they make all other roads when in comparison appear like an English turnpike. But that which infinitely increased the misery of this journey to me was my being obliged to continue on it, night and day, without rest.

"One dark and rainy night we set out from the hovel where we had stopped to get fresh mules, when presently we had to descend so steep a declivity that only mules could have done it, for the path was cut into steps like stairs, and thus for a considerable way and most of it through a thick wood. A guide went before us with a candle and lanthorn, or it would have been impossible to have found out the pathway; the night was dark and the rain violent. I, however, was well wrapped up in a large thick cloth great-coat, provided for me by the courier, with a large hood to it, which covered my head, hat and all, and kept me perfectly dry and seemed to fix me on my mule. However, I now grew so very much fatigued that I begun most heartily to repent having set out with the courier; my heart sunk within me when I saw from the summit of each mountain distant mountains rise which I knew I was to pass; it seemed as if this perilous journey was never to have an end, and in the midst of all this I was unable to speak a single word to be understood to my guide, either to inquire how long or how far we had still to go in this wretched way, and at the same time was ready to drop from the back of the mule on which I rode from fatigue and want of sleep. In this manner we travelled the space of about sixty miles, frequently exposed on the edges of precipices, where those

mules pass with wonderful safety even where it is dangerous for a man to walk.

"In the afternoon, having passed a dreadful cold night on the mountains, we got into a fertile country in the plains and crossed the river in a passage-boat. This was the most beautiful country I had ever seen; the river looked like a fine canal in a nobleman's pleasure-grounds; but the misery was increased, for now the burning heat of the sun overhead, and the reflected heat from the road beneath, made it like a fiery furnace, which soon brought on a dreadful, agonising headache and burning fever, and I was so ill that I feared I could not have continued my journey on to Rome, which terribly alarmed me; but I could only express my sufferings by signs and actions. In a short space we arrived at a small but neat town on the entrance of Tuscany, the name of which I do not know. Here we quitted both the mules and muleteers which had conducted us over the mountains, and after having refreshed ourselves got into an Italian *calass*, which is the common mode of travelling in this country. These vehicles are a shabby kind of open carriage with only two wheels, and ill calculated to relieve a traveller's aching and fevered head; for having been deprived of sleep or rest by night, and exposed to the excessive heat of the sun by day, in a hotter climate than I had ever known

before, my headache and fever increased to such a degree that I feared I should have died on the road.

"In this miserable state I was still obliged to go on, having no language to make known my complaint nor money in my pocket to stay where I was, my next letters of credit being on the banker at Rome, so that I now found myself reduced to the degree of insignificance of a mere *portmantua* with a direction on it, the carriage of which was to be paid at the end of the journey.

"It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when we entered the city of Florence, where we stayed a few hours only to refresh ourselves and give the courier time to execute the business of his office, and at ten the same night we set off for Rome in a carriage as before, having seen nothing of that beautiful city of Florence except the clock at the old palace, which shows the hour by a lamplight within a transparent dial plate.

"The road we had to go that night was mostly downhill and very rough, and as the courier was rather behind his time by not having had the advantage of going by sea, which would have expedited his journey, it was necessary therefore to make as much haste as possible; for which reason when he came to the first post-house from Florence he got a pair of fore-wheels, which are

always kept ready for the purpose, fixed to the shafts of his chaise with ropes, and also four fresh horses were put on, and thus off they set at full gallop as if flying for their lives, and continued so the whole way. The fatigue of this mode of travelling cannot be described or scarcely conceived but by those who have had the experience. Nothing can be worse contrived for travelling fast than those Italian *calasses*, which are not hung on springs, as ours in England are, but the body is fixed on the shafts in the same manner as a common cart, and are full as rough and uneasy.

"Forlorn traveller that I was, I had no alternative but to proceed on in this curious machine. Already weak and almost exhausted by pain and want of rest, I now verily believed this would have proved a finishing stroke to all my troubles, and really expected that my neck would have been dislocated or my backbone broke by the violent jolting of this horrible carriage going on at full speed in a road so rough that it made the carriage frequently leap from the ground.

"Although weak and exhausted for want of rest, I had no means left to succour my aching head, but to break the violence of the motion by my attitudes, which I varied, sometimes standing on tiptoe, then with my knees bent, then kneeling on the seat of the carriage, then resting on my hands—

all which threw me into so profuse a perspiration for the whole way after that it not unlikely contributed to cure my fever. The courier, who probably had been much used to it, sat on the seat, it is true, but vented frequent groans.

"However, being at last worn down by excess of fatigue, I fell fast asleep in the jolting carriage, and in that state entered the city of Rome at three o'clock in a bright moonlight morning on Friday the 23rd of May, 1777."

CHAPTER V

OUR PAINTER'S RECEPTION AT ROME; ACCOUNT OF THOSE PERSONS HE KNEW THERE

"ON my arrival in Rome I was set down at the Genoese post-office by the courier my conductor, and concluded that it was an inn; and when one of the clerks of the post-office came into the room and made his obedience to me, I made but little return to it, though the young man was very smartly dressed, mistaking him for a waiter. At length I perceived I was at the post-office. It was then my desire to have been taken to an inn in order to have cleaned and refreshed myself, for I was such a figure as was not fit to be seen. I had on my old clothes, now become very dirty from the journey, my beard was grown very long, and my hair, which had not been combed during the whole of the journey, was clotted about my ears.

"I knew no mortal in Rome, and but one word of Italian, which was '*albergo*,' but whenever I

uttered this word it was answered by '*dove?*' for there are no inns at Rome such as in England to put up at.

"When I found I could make nothing of this very limited conversation, I took the letter out of my pocket which had been given me by my banker at Genoa, directed to Sigr. Barrazzi, the banker at Rome. When the persons of the post-office saw this, they at once exclaimed with much pleasure as if they had been fearful that I would have been left upon their hands. I then patiently waited in the post-office, seated on my portmanteau with the remainder of my baggage by my side, till seven o'clock in the morning, when one of the porters of the office was dispatched to conduct me in my disorderly condition through the streets to the house of Barrazzi with all my luggage, which consisted of a portmanteau, two boxes containing my painting materials, a large leather bag, and a pair of horse-pistols which I bought at Turin to protect myself against robbers. In this manner I was escorted through the street and my apparatus laid at Barrazzi's door.

"I happened to have another letter in my pocket which Mr. Barron, the young English painter, had given me at Genoa, but this was only directed to Mr. Moore at Rome. Very luckily Barrazzi was at home, and he immediately sent his servant with

me and my baggage to the English coffee-house in the Piazza de Spania, where Mr. Moore, an eminent landskip painter, had his study and painting-room; but he was not yet returned from his lodging in the country, which was at the villa formerly Raffaelle's, near Rome. Here again I was left with all my luggage at Mr. Moore's door, who luckily soon came and received me with great hospitality, and we breakfasted together, and immediately after Mr. Moore with much kindness went with me to seek for a lodging; this was soon found, and one particularly convenient, as a painter had occupied it before, a Mr. Allen, a Scotchman, who had fitted the rooms up on purpose for himself, and they, of course, were very commodious for an artist. These apartments were situate in the Strada della Croce. Here I had two rooms; the one in which I slept was of a moderate size; the other was for my study, and twice as large, an exceeding good room which looked towards the street. Both were on the third floor. I gave for those rooms a zequin and half per month, and two zequins a year to an old woman of the house to go on errands for me. A zequin is worth about half a guinea English.

"In Rome the grandest apartments are generally on the third floor, as none but servants and the meaner sort inhabit the first and second. The

great live high, for the sake of the prospect and the air.

"The houses are commonly large in Rome, and every floor is occupied by a different family; the stairs are of stone and as common as the street, all sorts of people going up and down to the various families in the house, in the same manner as chambers in the Temple in London."

The artist who thus befriended the traveller was Jacob Moore, a Scotch landscape painter, commonly known as Moore of Rome. He went to that town in 1773, and died there twenty years later; painted ambitious pictures in the manner of Claude, and frequently exhibited in the Academy.

Thomas Allen, Northcote's predecessor in the rooms, is known vaguely to Bryan as a marine painter who painted scenes representing Queen Charlotte's voyage to England and her arrival there.

"Nothing could now exceed the pleasure I felt, after having been so long thrown about in a most miserable journey, to find myself in a quiet resting-place.

"Yet I cannot but observe that having thus settled myself in a lodging—which was done on the morning of my arrival in Rome—although tired by my journey, not having had any rest for many

nights, yet I could not resist the desire I had of visiting the Vatican palace, which I did on this first day of my arrival and before I had slept.

"The family from whom I took my lodgings consisted of an old Frenchman, formerly a hair-dresser, who had spent the best part of his time in Rome, and had been one of the domestics of Pope Clement the Thirteenth. He had one daughter, unmarried, who lived with him; she was an old coquette, full of affectation. In her youth she had been a reputed beauty—at least she said so, for she often repeated it, and that she had sat to the famous Chevalier Pompeo Battoni for a Magdalene in a picture he painted, which is now in a church in Dresden; and also to the Chevalier Benefialle when he painted a picture of the Mother of God. She had read a great deal, had a vast memory and a good capacity, but was a most bigoted Roman Catholic, which one instance is sufficient to show.

"About a month before I came to Rome she had been a considerable time without a lodger at her house, and therefore determined to go and pray to St. Onofrio, as this saint is the provider for those who are in want—in Rome at least. One should conclude that this saint must have more applications to him than any one of the whole calendar.

"The church dedicated to him is situated on the

summit of a steep hill, to which you ascend by a vast flight of steps or stairs. These steps she and her old woman servant with the most profound reverence crept up upon their hands and knees, and to this great saint in his own church they offered up their prayers, imploring him to provide them with a lodger. The holy Onofrio lent an ear to their petition, and within a month from that time sent me to her house. This she related to me herself, and I readily acknowledged my obligation to the saint who had been so good as to be my introductor to her, and more particularly so as I was totally unknown to him till I came to Rome."

Pompeo Battoni, to whom Northcote's landlady had posed, was one of the celebrities of last century. He was born at Lucca in 1708, and brought up as a goldsmith, but turned portrait painter to such good purpose that twenty-two sovereigns are said to have sat to him, Mengs, his only leading rival, being chiefly resident in Spain.

Benefialle, a Roman painter of note in his day, died in 1764; his most famous work appears to have been a saloon in the Palazzo Spada, the whole of which he painted.

"Various are the modes of study pursued by the young artists at Rome, differing according to their

several inclinations and abilities, nor is there any general or fixed mode. I employed myself chiefly in making sketches or copying parts from such pictures as I thought would be the most useful memorandums from the treasures of art in that city. I principally passed my time in the Vatican, which to the eye and mind of an artist is the highest feast in the world. I painted nothing original at that time, except a few portraits of my particular friends, and one of myself, which was requested of me by the director of the Gallery at Florence" (the Uffizi Gallery), "and they did me the honour to place it in that grand collection of the portraits of painters which are all executed by their own hands.[1]

"Whilst at Rome I became acquainted with several persons since eminent in their professions—to wit: first, Miss Hadfield, since well known as Maria Cosway, wife to Cosway the miniature painter; also Thos. Banks, since eminent as a sculptor; Prince Hoare, a celebrated dramatic writer, but who then studied the art of painting as his profession; also the well-known Henry Fuseli the painter. With all those I was in habits of intimacy and friendship. Fuseli left Rome about a twelve-

[1] By a curious coincidence Northcote's Italian sketch-book, containing his drawings from the pictures which most interested him in the Italian towns, fell into Mr. Hennell's hands not long after he acquired the manuscript memoir.

month before me to join company with Sir Robert and Lady Smith, then at Bologna on their return to England.

"Fuseli went to visit his native city Zurich on his way to England, and from thence wrote the following letter, which I insert, as it contains a tincture of character.

"LUGANO, *Sept.* 29, 1778.

"DEAR NORTHCOTE,—You may and must think it unfriendly to have advanced to the borders of Switzerland without writing to you—but what would have been friendly to you was death to me, and self-preservation is the first duty of the eighteenth century. Madness lies on the road I must think over to come at you, and with the sound of Rome my heart swells, my eye kindles, and frenzy seizes me. I have lived at Bologna as agreeably and as happily as my lacerated heart and boiling brains would let me with Sir Robert and his lady.

"You, whose eye diverges not, will make the use of Bologna that I have not, or at best very imperfectly; much more than what is thought of may be made of that place. What I admire and what I have frequented most, what indeed suited my melancholy most, are the cloisters of St. Michel, in Bosco, near the city. The fragments of painting

there are by Lodovic Caracci, and his school are in my opinion superior for realities to the Farnese Gallery—there is a figure in one of the pictures which my soul has got her seal upon; 'tis to no purpose to tell you what figure—if you find it not, or doubt, it was not painted for you, and if you find it, you will be obliged for the pleasure to yourself only; still, in that, and in all I have seen since my departure, Hesiod's paradox gains more and more ground with me, that the half is fuller than the whole, or, if you will, full of the whole.

"At Mantua I have had emotions which I did not apprehend, from Julio Romano at Rome; but the post going, I have not time to enter into so contradictory a character.

"The enclosed I shall redemand at your hands in England; *take heed of the mice* of Rome; you may tell me what you please. Those I should wish to know something about, you know not; I have wrote to Nanina in the Bolognette palace, pray give her my best compliments—e dittele che quando Sara in Inghilterra, trovero qualche opportunita di proverle prima del mio ritorno in Italia, che non sono capace di Scordarmi dell' Amicitia Sua.

"To Mr. Hoare I shall write next post.

"Love me.

"FUSELI."

Nanina is the young lady alluded to at p. 156. Hesiod's paradox—πλέον ἥμισυ παντός—means "the half is more than the whole." Fuseli, who seems to have given himself airs about his Greek, obviously confounded πλέον with πλεών. This has a certain interest in connection with what Northcote says a little further on.

"The foregoing letter is not without a tincture of affectation. I do hate affectation of every kind. Affectation is the acting of a lie. It is a lie told by action instead of words, equally intended to deceive. It is generally a composition of conceit and deceit, an attempt to gain a superiority by false pretences, and indicates a degree of vulgarity in the mind. No one can be truly great or good who is infected with affectation.

"As Fuseli has since gained a degree of eminence in the world, perhaps it will gratify curiosity to see a slight sketch of his character, as also of those of Banks and Miss Hadfield, the other Roman acquaintance of mine, who have since gained eminence in their professions.

"Henry Fuseli was a Swiss, born at Zurich, a man of lively imagination, but he had in his works much of the extravagance of what we term the grotesque.

"He had some pretensions to wit, and generally

in his conversation was humorously satirical; this qualification he kept in constant practice on all he knew, whether friends or foes, but not to their faces, for each person was entertained with the absurdities of his friend. He seemed to have no idea of the existence of such a quality as gratitude, yet he was harmless, except with his tongue. As he was a very timorous man, who could not well face danger, that served in some degree to check the freedom of his speech. He had the reputation of being a good scholar; it was said he understood the Greek well; he certainly had been very well educated, as when he first came to England he was employed by the booksellers in a literary capacity, and was afterwards a private tutor to the young son of the Earl of Waldegrave, with whom at length he had a quarrel, in which Fuseli gave the young nobleman a violent push and drove his head through a paper screen, after which they parted. Then it was that Fuseli first thought of practising the art of painting as a profession, having had great encouragement given him by Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had seen some of his inventions in that art and had bestowed on them the highest praise. Therefore he determined to go to Rome for his improvement in that art, and there it was that I first met him."

Northcote while at Rome made a sketch of Fuseli in profile, which is now owned by Mr. J. Carrick Moore. The queer pair remained friends for another half century—or at least acquaintances. They had two of the sharpest tongues in London, and used to watch each other, it is said, like game-cocks before a spurring match. Hazlitt knew both, and in a chapter of his "Table Talk," which begins with an eulogium of Northcote (quoted at p. 12), he sketches Fuseli with his usual energy.

"Mr. Fuseli's conversation is more striking and extravagant, but less pleasing and natural than Mr. Northcote's. He deals in paradoxes and caricatures. He talks allegories and personifications, as he paints them. You are sensible of effort without any repose; no careless pleasantry, no traits of character or touches from nature; everything is laboured or overdone. His ideas are gnarled, hard, and distorted, like his features; his theories stalking and straddle-legged, like his gait; his projects aspiring and gigantic, like his gestures; his performance uncouth and drawlish, like his person. His pictures are also like himself, with eyeballs of stone stuck in rims of tin, and muscles twisted together like ropes or wires. Yet Fuseli is undoubtedly a man of genius, and capable of the most wild and grotesque combinations of fancy. It is a pity that he ever applied himself to painting, which

must always be reduced to the test of the senses. He is a little like Dante or Ariosto, perhaps, but no more like Michael Angelo, Raphael, or Correggio than I am. Nature, he complains, puts him out. Yet he can laugh at artists who 'paint ladies with iron lap-dogs,' and he described the great masters of old in words or lines full of truth, and glancing from a pen or tongue of fire. I conceive any person would be more struck with Mr. Fuseli at first sight, but would wish to visit Mr. Northcote oftener. There is a bold and startling outline in his style of talking, but not the delicate finishing or bland tone that there is in that of the latter. Whatever there is harsh or repulsive about him is, however, in a great degree carried off by his animated foreign accent and broken English, which give character where there is none, and soften its asperities where it is too abrupt and violent."

Haydon, in his "Autobiography," jots down his first impressions of Fuseli, whom he always liked and in a measure admired.

"Fuseli had a great reputation for the terrible—I had a mysterious awe of him." This awe was heightened by entry into a studio hung round with "galvanised devils": "I expected," says Haydon, "the floor to give way; I fancied Fuseli himself to be a giant. I heard his footsteps, and saw a little bony hand slide round the edge of the door,

MRS. COSWAY.

followed by a little white-headed, lion-faced man in an old flannel dressing-gown tied round his waist with a piece of rope, and upon his head the bottom of Mrs. Fuseli's work-basket."

Northcote next summarises his recollections of Mrs. Cosway, whose charming countenance has been preserved by her husband.

"Maria, or Mary, Hadfield was born at Florence of English parents, who kept a lodging and boarding-house on a very large establishment, which was the resort of all the nobility and gentry who at that time visited Italy. When she first came to Rome, about the year 1778, she was just eighteen years of age, not unhandsome, endowed with considerable talents, and with a form extremely delicate and a pleasing manner of the utmost simplicity. But she was withal, active, ambitious, proud, and restless; she had been the object of adoration of an indulgent father, who unfortunately for her had never checked the growth of her imperfections; she had some small knowledge of painting, the same of music, and about the same of five or six languages, but was very imperfect in all these.

"She came over to England after the death of her father in company with her mother, two brothers, and two sisters, filled with the highest expectations of being the wonder of the nation like

another Angelica Kauffman. But alas! these expectations failed; the money which the father had gained in Florence was quickly spent in England, and the family were soon in some degree of distress. This change, to her so very great, she bore with admirable fortitude and magnanimity, but in the end, after having refused better offers in her better days, she from necessity married Cosway the miniature painter, who at that time adored her, though she always despised him. After they had lived together some time the disgust on each part became so powerful that they parted by mutual consent, and she went to Lyons, in France, and became the superior of a seminary for young ladies."

Northcote's account is summary and not wholly correct. Maria Hadfield was of Irish descent; was born at Leghorn, not at Florence. In England she worked for Boydell's Shakspere. After she separated from Cosway she went to Paris and worked for some time copying for the engravers; she only entered the convent after the loss of her daughter.

Cosway was, like Northcote, a Devonshire man. He was born at Tiverton, and studied under Hudson. He was made R.A. in 1771, and was in his own day scarcely less famous for his large

pictures than for his miniatures. In our time he is so much forgotten that there needs no apology for quoting Hazlitt's description of him.

"Cosway is the last of these I shall mention. At that name I pause, and must be excused if I consecrate to him a *petit souvenir* in my best manner; for he was Fancy's child. What a fairy palace was his of specimens of art, antiquarianism, and virtu, jumbled all together in the richest disorder, dusty, shadowy, obscure, with much left to the imagination (how different from the finical, polished, petty, modernised air of some collections we have seen!), and with copies of the old masters, cracked and damaged, which he touched and retouched with his own hand, and yet swore that they were the genuine, the pure original. All other collectors are fools to him; they go about with painful anxiety to find out the realities: he said he had them, and in a moment made them of the breath of his nostrils and of the fumes of a lively imagination. Here was the crucifix that Abelard prayed to, a lock of Eloisa's hair, the dagger with which Felton stabbed the Duke of Buckingham, the first finished sketch of the Jocunda, Titian's large colossal profile of Peter Aretine, a mummy of an Egyptian king, a feather of a phœnix, a piece of Noah's Ark. Were the articles authentic? What matter?—his faith in them was true. He

was gifted with a second sight in such matters ; he believed whatever was incredible. Fancy bore sway in him, and so vivid were his impressions that they included the substances of things in them. The agreeable and the true with him were one. He believed in Swedenborgianism ; he believed in animal magnetism ; he had conversed with more than one person of the Trinity ; he could talk with his lady at Mantua through some fine vehicle of sense, as we speak to a servant downstairs through a conduit pipe. Richard Cosway was not the man to flinch from an ideal proposition. Once, at an Academy dinner, when some question was made whether the story of Lambert's Leap was true, he started up, and said it was, for he was the person that performed it. He once assured me that the knee-pan of King James I. in the ceiling at Whitehall was nine feet across (he had measured it in concert with Mr. Cipriani, who was repairing the figures). He could read in the Book of the Revelation without spectacles, and foretold the return of Bonaparte from Elba—and from St. Helena! His wife, the most ladylike of English women, being asked in Paris what sort of a man her husband was, made answer, '*Toujours riant, toujours gai.*' This was his character. He must have been of French extraction. His soul appeared to possess the life of a bird ; and such was the jauntiness of his air and

manner, that to see him sit to have his half-boots laced on, you would fancy (by the help of a figure) that, instead of a little withered elderly gentleman, it was Venus attired by the Graces. His miniatures and whole-length drawings were not merely fashionable—they were fashion itself. His imitations of Michael Angelo were not the thing. When more than ninety he retired from his profession, and used to hold up the palsied hand that had painted lords and ladies for upwards of sixty years, and smiled, with unabated good-humour, at the vanity of human wishes. Take him with all his faults and follies, we scarce 'shall look upon his like again!'"

The worst of quoting from Hazlitt is that it tells sorely upon what comes next. Northcote's characterisation of Banks is not much in Hazlitt's manner.

"Thomas Banks was a man of strict integrity and great simplicity of manners, and blunt even to rudeness. He had raised himself to notice by his abilities as a sculptor, having been bred a common carver in wood. He was quite uneducated, nor had he seen much of cultivated life during the time of his youth, or acquired much of the manners afterwards. He must be considered as a man of genius, but his works are very unequal; they are sometimes great and sometimes

graceful in a high degree, and demonstrate a mind both strong and original, but sometimes they are both clumsy and insipid."

Banks, the first English sculptor of any note, was born at Lambeth in 1735, the son of an architect. While apprenticed to a carver, Mr. Barlow, he also studied under Scheemakers, the sculptor. He contributed to the first Royal Academy Exhibition, and in 1772 went to Rome with a travelling studentship. In 1779 he returned and pursued his art in England. Later in life he made an excursion to Russia and obtained the patronage of Catherine. His "Achilles Enraged for the Loss of Briseis" stands in the entry of the Royal Academy. One may note also among his works the monument to Sir Eyre Coote in Westminster Abbey and the portrait bust of Warren Hastings, now in the National Portrait Gallery.

"Another extraordinary acquaintance (I will not call him friend," says Northcote in an access of anti-Gallican humour) "which I made in Rome was that of David, the painter of France, since so famous as an artist and so infamous as an instrument and favourite of the tyrant Robespierre. I and he spent many long summer's days together in the Vatican palace in the pursuit of our studies. David

was then young and guiltless of those crimes which afterwards stained his character, yet at that time his discourse savoured strongly of those principles which so much influenced his future conduct in life ; all his conversation was tinctured with blasphemy in respect to religion, and licentiousness in regard to government, interspersed with many ludicrous anecdotes of the late unfortunate King of France. It is also to be remarked that at that time he always carried pocket-pistols in secret about him, contrary to the laws of Rome against bearing about you concealed offensive weapons. But most of the French artists at that time in Rome fell in some degree under the above description."

David was born in Paris in 1748. He obtained the *prix de Rome* in 1774, and returned in 1780. His part in politics is well known. Chosen to represent Paris in 1792, he sided with Robespierre throughout, and after his leader's death was imprisoned and nearly executed.

"Poverty at Rome is not attended, as in England, by its usual companion vulgarity, for which reason society is delightful even among the poor, as few are rich at Rome. I and my friend P. Hoare had much pleasure in our acquaintance in the family of Don Antonio Aquila, an Armenian

priest from Georgia, and very poor. He had two beautiful nieces who lived with him; the eldest, named Agnese Aquila, was about seventeen years of age, the youngest, about sixteen, named Rosa. They both of them danced, sung, and played on several instruments of music with the most exquisite natural taste, grace, and feeling; one of those afterwards, I was informed, went on the Italian stage; the other became the mistress of a priest.

"The women of Italy in general have a taste and elegance which seems inherent in them; their walk is all grace and dignity of motion, and affects you like seeing a whole procession in any other country; but I think this is not uncommonly found in a warm climate, which naturally produces a kind of listless grace (if I may say so) and slow action which gives a beautiful flowing contour to the limbs. On the contrary, in colder regions the action is quick, which takes from dignity, and the body being pinched with cold, the lines of the figure, of course, become more angular. But at Rome you will often meet with those who, notwithstanding their poverty, are not only graceful in their actions, but otherwise highly accomplished.

"I had an instance of this in a family (with whom I became acquainted by means of Mr. Fuseli) who lived in the upper apartments, or, as we should call them, garrets, of the Bolognette palace. Here were

three daughters of an old superannuated servant of the palace who had nothing to live upon but the small stipend allowed to him by his master, the Marquis Bolognette, according to the custom of Italy to old servants who are past their labour. This small income was to provide for the father, the mother, and three daughters. Those three girls had scarcely ever been three times in their lives out of those apartments except to church, and yet they possessed all the refined accomplishments of a Court. Their dispositions were very different, yet each of them exceedingly interesting.

"The eldest sister, named Angela, had great sprightliness and wit in conversation. The second, named Leonora, had a most exquisite taste in music, and sang and played on the pianoforte with vast expression. The youngest, called Nanina, possessed the most refined softness of manners, with surprising capacity of mind. Those girls seemed to be endowed by nature alone, except what they could learn from their few acquaintance, never having seen anything of the world beyond their own apartments, which were at the height of just one hundred stairs."

Of Northcote's chief intimate of this period, Prince Hoare, no account has yet been given. He was about ten years younger than Northcote,

having been born in 1775; his father, William Hoare, was a Royal Academician. Of his career one may borrow Haydon's lively but not too charitable summing-up.

"He was a delicate, feeble-looking man, with a timid expression of face, and when he laughed heartily he seemed to be crying. His father was a bad painter at Bath, who, having a high opinion of Prince's genius, sent him with a valet to Italy to get what nature had denied him in the Capella Sistina. He went through the whole routine of labouring for natural talents by copying Michael Angelo, copying Raffaelle, copying Titian; came home to be the rival of Reynolds, found his own talents in art were of the feeblest order, and being well educated, took refuge in writing farces and adaptations of Spanish and French plays, which his friends Storace and Kelly fitted with music. He was an amiable though disappointed man, the companions of the democrats Godwin and Holcroft, though an intimate friend of Sir Vicary Gibbs."

Northcote having sketched the leading figures in his circle of acquaintances proceeds to relate certain episodes of his foreign experience. The first is curious reading nowadays.

"If a Protestant dies at Rome it is an affair of considerable difficulty to perform with any decency

the funeral ceremony for the deceased, as you have no protection from the Church or from the law against the insults and contempt of a bigoted and enraged mob, who call the dead who have not been within the pale of their Church a roast for the devil, and attribute to us as Protestants the same folly which our vulgar attach to them as Catholics on those occasions, inquiring if we do not put money and victuals in the coffin with the dead.

"I attended one funeral at Rome—that of an Englishwoman, the wife of Parr, an English painter, who died there. The company, all English, who attended this ceremony, went in hired coaches, about eleven o'clock at night, as private and as quick as possible, to avoid the impertinence of the common people. Mr. Parr went himself in that coach which contained the corpse of his late wife in her coffin, the rest of the company in two other coaches. The burying-ground is in a field outside the walls of the city, where the Protestants of all nations are permitted to bury their dead, as they are not suffered to have the rights of sepulture in any Romish church.

"As the company arrived at the burial-place with great expedition, they had but few followers, and those few behaved with much decorum. The husband of the deceased gave gloves to all his friends who attended the funeral according to the English

custom, and also a large wax torch to each to light at the place of interment, which was at the base of the pyramid, the tomb of the ancient Roman Caius Cestus. There being no Protestant priest at that time in Rome, Mr. Banks, the sculptor, read the funeral service. The whole ceremony had an awful though forlorn and dreary effect, and strongly pressed on all present the feeling of being in a foreign land. The service being ended, they extinguished their torches, and returned to their homes in peace."

This Parr may have been an architectural designer who published in 1737 a view of London from Westminster Bridge. Bryan cannot trace him beyond 1750, and he may very well have settled at Rome.

"In the summer months the Pope resides at the palace of Monte Cavallo, where all artists have easy admission to copy and study from those high works of art which adorn the Vatican till his Holiness returns again there for the winter season.

"I spent my time chiefly in this palace, and had at different times explored most of the apartments, and had been highly delighted with the sight of a very fine picture by Vandyke of the 'Massacre of the Maccabees,' which was in the Pope's dressing-

room and next to that in which he slept. You are to observe that the 'Stanzas of Raffaelle,' as they are called, are at a considerable distance from those occupied by the Court, although on the same floor; and communicate by a suite of large empty rooms, which are unfurnished, never seen, and of no use; you can enter those rooms by a small door which opens into the rooms of Raffaelle. It was through this means I had first seen the picture. One morning, after the Pope's return to the Vatican, I, with my friend P. Hoare, was in the rooms of Raffaelle; and, seeing this door open, I persuaded my companion to follow me in order to show him this fine Vandyke in the Pope's dressing-room, as by passing through those rooms we avoided all interruption from the guards, who would have stopped us. But when we arrived at the door of that room in which the picture was, and only one from the Pope's bedroom, a man who stood as guard against the door prevented us from entering it, saying his Holiness was just at that time about to rise and was yet in bed. The man seemed much surprised, as well he might, at seeing strangers so very near the Pope's bedroom. He conceived we could only get there by having passed through all the front rooms, which are filled with Swiss guards, foot-guards, footmen, pages, and persons of the household, all of whom would have prevented our passing had they seen us,

and who most probably knew nothing of the private range of rooms through which we got entrance to the Pope's apartments. Finding our labour lost, we thought of making our way back again, not by the way we came, but through the public rooms, which were filled with guards.

"When about to return we were met by the prelate who was master of the household to his Holiness and brother to the Prince Altieri, surrounded by a great retinue, who attended on him. When the prelate saw two strangers got to the innermost rooms of the Pope's apartments he appeared quite petrified with astonishment, and hastily demanded who let them in, and took particular notice that Mr. Hoare had his walking-cane in his hand, a thing never permitted in the palace or chapels of the Pope. Mr. Hoare answered him in Italian that nobody had prevented them; the prelate then inquired of the persons present why those strangers had been suffered to pass thus unexamined, when they all answer'd that they had never seen those strangers till that moment, which was the real truth.

"The Monseigneur then grew very angry, and not being able to get a satisfactory answer from anybody present, he in great wrath exclaimed, 'Good God, in this manner our Lord may be assassinated!' We two wanderers now expected

nothing else but to be sent as prisoners to the castle of St. Angelo's till the business should be cleared up. The haughty priest again demanded 'Who brought them in?' when Mr. Hoare, in a bold and peremptory tone, answered, 'I have said all I can; nobody interrupted our coming here. I can say no more.' Then, after saying many words, talking very fast and being in a violent rage with the pages-in-waiting, who knew no more of the matter than himself, the prelate ended the affair by saying, with a haughty toss of his head, 'Go your way, go your way,' which was joyfully and quickly obeyed. But the little private door which led to this way was always afterwards kept locked, as it needed, for indeed nothing would have been easier, as the prelate justly observed, than really to have assassinated their Lord had there been any inclination towards it, as the last inner chamber next to the Pope's bedroom had but one man to guard the door, and he without any weapon in his hands or in the room to defend himself against any assault.

"About this time I lost my mother, who died on the 3rd of September, 1778, at Plymouth, Devonshire, being in the sixty-seventh year of her age.

"In the same month I had the honour of being elected a member of the Imperial Academy of Florence, my diploma from that most ancient body being dated on the 27th of September, 1778.

"In the month of April following I went to Naples in company of a party of my friends (artists), amongst whom were Maria Hadfield, Thomas Banks, the sculptor, Prince Hoare, Henry Tresham, Alexander Day, miniature painter and dealer in paintings, Mrs. Banks, and others. After tarrying about a month and seeing whatever was curious in that country, I returned again to Rome."

Tresham and Day both combined the pursuit of art with the more lucrative business of supplying English collectors with old masters. Tresham was born in Dublin in 1749; he went to Italy with Lord Cawdor. On returning to England he worked for Boydell's Shakespeare, became A.R.A. in 1791, and Professor of Painting to the Academy in 1807. He was also a writer on art, and edited a publication called the *British Gallery*.

Day (who is said by Bryan in his Dictionary to have been born in 1772—a date obviously some twenty years too late, as Northcote met him in 1778) resided many years in Rome, and returned to England in 1800, bringing with him a collection of pictures, many of which now adorn the National Gallery, notably Titian's "Rape of Ganymede" and "Venus and Adonis." In the "Conversations" an odd phrase of his is quoted, dating from this visit. "He (N.) mentioned his going with Prince Hoare

and Day to take leave of some fine portraits of Titian's that hung in a dark corner of a gallery at Naples; and as Day looked at them for the last time with tears in his eyes, he said, 'Ah! he was a fine old *mouser!*' . . . *You* (Hazlitt) understand the epithet because you have seen a great number of Titian's pictures, and know that cat-like, watchful, penetrating look he gives to all his faces, which nothing else expresses perhaps so well as the phrase Day made use of."

Northcote concludes this chapter of his history with a regret.

"It had long been my earnest desire to have painted the portrait of the then reigning Pope Pius the Sixth, and the Cardinal Salavivino, Secretary of State, had been applied to accordingly, but having deferred making the application till late I was by that means prevented, as the Pope was then ill in health, and I had now spent sufficient time at Rome, and thought it not worth my while to wait for the recovery of his Holiness, so gave the business up, beginning now to prepare for my departure from Rome."

CHAPTER VI

NORTHCOTE LEAVES ROME; ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY TO SEVERAL CITIES OF ITALY; AND RETURN TO ENGLAND THROUGH GERMANY

NORTHCOTE left Rome in June, 1779, and set out with his friend, Prince Hoare, for Florence, passing through Folignia, Perugia, and Cortona. At Florence they made a considerable stay, and formed several acquaintanceships with Italian families. A notable one was with the singer, Ann Storace, of whom he writes as follows:—

"She was at this time about sixteen years of age, and a girl of great spirit; she was then accompanied by her father, mother, and brother, who came from England, where she was born, in order for her improvement as a singer; her brother also for his improvement as a composer. At this time she had never appeared on any stage, but was for the first time engaged as second woman at the Italian opera

at Florence, and the famous Miss Cecilia Davis, also an English woman, was the first woman. Storace was to make her first entrance on the stage in the opera of 'Castor and Pollux,' which opera was received with the highest marks of approbation. The music was eminently beautiful, the scenery various and pleasing, and it had a great run.

"Signor Marquisi (Marchesi) was the first man, and at that time a very excellent performer.

"I and my companion, Mr. P. Hoare, were consulted, and assisted in decorating our friend Storace for her first appearance, in which she gained great approbation, and performed beyond all expectation; indeed, surprising for one who had never before acted on the stage. Her friends attended that evening behind the scenes, being very anxious and much interested in her success."

Ann Storace was the daughter of Stefano Storace, a double-bass player. She studied under Sacchini in Venice, and after her *début* in 1780, at which Northcote assisted, was a shining light in Florence, Milan, Vienna, and London till her retirement in 1808. She died at Dulwich in 1817. Prince Hoare collaborated with Storace in a musical farce, called "My Grandmother," in which Ann Storace appeared with great success at Drury Lane in 1790. Cecilia Davies, born in 1740, sang

in London, Paris, Vienna, and in several towns of Italy, where she was known as l'Inglesina, and admittedly famous. Her sister Marianne often accompanied her on the harmonica or musical glasses; but this instrument acted upon Marianne Davies as on so many others, and totally broke down her nerves. Its use for public performances was legally prohibited in several States. After Marianne's death in 1792, Cecilia Davies retired from public performances, and was unhappy enough to live on till 1836, when she died at the age of ninety-six, worn out with age and extreme poverty. A passage in the "Conversations" relates to this period in her life after her retirement from the stage.

"'My neighbour, Mr. Rowe, the bookseller,' said Northcote, 'informed me the other day that Signora Cecilia Davies frequently came to his shop, and always inquired after me. Did you ever hear of her?' 'No, never.' 'She must be very old now. Fifty years ago, in the time of Garrick, she made a vast sensation. All England rang with her name. I do assure you that in this respect Madame Catalani was not more talked of. Afterwards she had retired to Florence, and was a kind of *prima donna* there when Storace first came out. This was at the time when Mr. Hoare and myself were in Italy; and I remember we went to call upon her. She had then in a great measure fallen off,

but she was still very much admired. What a strange thing a reputation of this kind is, that the person herself survives, and sees the meteors of fashion rise and fall one after another, while she remains totally disregarded as if there had been no such person, yet thinking all the while that she was better than any of them. I have hardly heard her name mentioned in the last thirty years, though in her time she was quite as famous as any one since.'"

Luigi Marchesi, a native of Milan, was at this time the most famous male soprano in Italy. He lived from 1755 to 1829.

"At Florence we remained about three months, and in that time, on August 9, 1779, I was made a member of the ancient Etruscan Academy of Cortona, and also a member of the Academy *Dei Forti* of Rome, the diploma being dated November 4, 1779. I painted my portrait a second time for the Imperial Academy of Florence.

"In the time I was at Florence I made no finished copy from any one picture, but slight sketches from all such as might become useful recollections in my future progress. I also took hints from drawings in the Gallery, of which there is a vast collection. I had a great desire to have painted the portrait of the Grand Duke, but unluckily he was in Germany during the whole time

we were in Florence, otherwise I was informed that the Grand Duke would have given me a present of a gold medal or chain, which is not uncommon when a picture is presented to the Gallery.

"After having spent a pleasant summer season in this city, we set out for Bologna to take a survey of those treasures in the art of which the Carraccis and their school have so amply stored that city. We saw every curious work there, from the highest effort of art down to the portrait of the Virgin Mary by the hand of St. Luke, which is preserved there in a convent and visited by all strangers, more from devotion than delight, it not being a very good proof of his abilities as an artist.

"In the walks which we took in the city of Bologna to view the various works of art, so numerous and dispersed about in the different churches and convents, we went one afternoon to visit a church belonging to a convent of nuns, in which is preserved the body of St. Catherine of Bologna, who had been a nun of that convent. We desired to have a sight of this *corpo santo*, and the sacristan quickly informed the nuns of our request, whereupon a small casement window was opened under one of the altars, and on looking between a strong grating of iron bars we saw into a small, rich chapel, which had no other light than what came from lamps and candles. Exactly front-

ing this small window, at about four yards distance, was the body of this grand saint, stuck up in a most magnificent gilt chair. It was richly habited in robes of silk and brocade, so that nothing of the body could be seen except the face, hands, and feet, which were left bare, and by time were grown hard and dry and as black as ink. In one hand was held a crucifix, and in the other a rich prayer-book. There were some friars in the church at the time, who ran eagerly up to the casement to have a look at this curious and holy relic. They immediately began to say prayers to it, and Mr. Hoare took out a small opera-glass, and looked at the figure as if it had been a beauty; this, together with the superstitious prate of the old sacristan who showed the saint, forced me into a burst of laughter; but I was sorry for it afterwards, as the friars must have taken me for the devil incarnate in being so profane. The old sacristan at the time was taken up in relating her miracles. He said that after the saint had been buried a week she was taken up again, that her nose had been pressed flat by the cover of the coffin in which she had been laid, but that on the first time she was carried out in procession she raised up her hand and set her nose right again; and that the liquid which came out of her nose at the time was immediately taken and deposited in a golden urn, which was then placed in the niche

over her head, and preserved as a holy relic. He said also that the part all round her mouth, which appeared so much whiter than the rest of the face (as it did from the thin lips drawn from the teeth), was occasioned by Jesus Christ when He came down and kissed her. All this was related with the most religious solemnity as sacred truths. He also added that we might go into the chapel and kiss her feet, as many did, if we got a licence from the Cardinal Legate, which would be granted without difficulty.

"We spent near three weeks in Bologna. Thence we went on our way through Modena to Parma, where I made a copy of the famous Magdalene in the well-known picture by Correggio, at that time in the Academy at Parma, but since removed to Paris and placed in the grand collection of the Louvre.

"This famous picture first belonged to a convent of nuns in Parma, for whom it was painted; but they, being much in want of money to repair their church, had secretly made a bargain to part with it to the King of Poland for the sum of seven thousand pounds. This coming to the knowledge of the Duke of Parma, he took the picture himself and placed it in the Academy for the improvement of the artists; rebuilt the nuns' church and also gave them another picture painted by the famous Pompeo Battoni of Rome, Cavalier.

"We stayed two months at Parma and became acquainted with Ravenet, the famous engraver, who had resided some years in England, but was at this time retired to Parma, where he was a director with others of the Academy of Parma, and had the honour of knighthood from Pope Gangarelli. We received great civilities from him, as also from Signor Baldrighi, who was principal painter to the Infanta of Parma; also from Angelo Poggi (father of Anthony Poggi, well known in England), who entertained us with a superb dinner."

Simon Ravenet (son of Simon François Ravenet, who engraved "Marriage à la Mode") was born in London. He went to Paris and studied under François Boucher; then settled in Parma to engrave all the Correggios in that city. This task, which occupied him from 1779 to 1785, was only just begun when Northcote met him.

Pope Gangarelli is Clement XIV.

Giuseppe Baldrighi, a native of Pavia, studied like Ravenet under Boucher. He was made principal painter to the Ducal Court of Parma, and established a school of painting there. His "Prometheus Released" is in the Academy of Parma.

Angelo Poggi's son is mentioned also (in no very complimentary way) at p. 117.

"Our time at Parma was rendered particularly pleasant by acquaintance with an Italian family to whom we were introduced by a letter we had procured of a friend at Florence. This family consisted of the man, his wife, their daughter, a girl about fifteen, and two sons. Better people never existed on earth. On the morning when we left Parma, although we had taken leave of this good family the night before, yet they waited for us in the street, and stopping the carriage, with tears in their eyes they presented us a basket of preserved fruit and took a last leave.

"There is a misery attendant on travelling which none but travellers know which is that of contracting friendships frequently with persons who you know you must soon take leave of for ever. This operates somewhat like a continual course of funerals, and is a real distress.

"Of this family, the father was, I think, an inferior kind of sculptor, or rather a stonemason, but he was honesty itself; his name was Signor Francesco Albertoli; the daughter's name was Angela Albertoli, not unhandsome, and innocent as an angel. The whole family seemed to be without vice, and lived in the most perfect harmony together; their rank in life was of the middle class.

"We had intended to go from Parma directly to Mantua and so on to Venice, but the roads at that

season of the year, we were informed, were so very bad between Parma and Mantua, that it was next to impossible to pass that way; and at any rate it would be attended with much time and expense, as buffaloes would be often necessary to draw the carriage. Besides, there was considerable danger from robbers who infested that road; for which reasons we were advised to return again to Modena and go down the river to Venice in a bark with the courier, who was only two days and two nights on this voyage.

"Accordingly we set out from Parma about one o'clock in the day, when it rained as hard as it could pour.

"We were in a common Italian *calasse*, which is much worse than the most paltry English one-horse chaise; in this miserable vehicle we set off, exposed to wind and rain, and that night got fifteen miles from Parma. On the next day it snowed and was very cold when we arrived at Modena; here we had the pleasure of seeing some fine pictures and drawings in the Duke's palace.

"Next morning about four o'clock we and our baggage got on board the bark for Venice; the company besides ourselves consisted of a man and his wife with a brawling infant in her arms, a half-starved priest, a young woman, the courier, and three men to manage the boat.

"There was a kind of cabin in the boat made up with boards, but no kind of beds for the passengers. In the beginning of the evening a fire was kindled in the open part of the boat for the accommodation of the passengers, as the weather was very cold, but this proved to be an increase of misery, as it only served nearly to stifle and blind us with smoke without giving the least heat. The night was long, very dark and so excessively cold that we feared being frozen to death, for there was no partition or anything to screen us from the night air, and the poor child kept almost incessantly crying the whole night from the cold, which prevented any possibility of sleeping for our travellers, who had nothing to comfort them but a little cold meat and a flask of Florence wine which by chance they had brought with them; and what made it still worse was that the boat was tied up at night, as it grew so excessively dark that it was impossible to proceed on our voyage.

"On the next morning we went on shore at a small town on the banks of the river, and whilst the rest of the company went to Mass, it being a feast day, we refreshed ourselves with some hot coffee and sweet cake and wine at a coffee-house, and got ourselves warm by exercise, and then we all set out again on our voyage. During the daytime it proved very pleasant, as the country on the banks of the

river is very beautiful, and enriched by many fine villas belonging to the Venetian nobles; most of them are by Palladio. From Modena to the river it is a canal; afterwards you enter the River Po.

"The second night was spent as miserably as the first, and we had the satisfaction of being informed that we must pass another such, if not two more, during the same voyage. We now began most heartily to repent we had ever taken passage in this boat, having nothing to rest ourselves on at night but to lay our heads on our portmanteaus. The courier had been more prudent, as he had brought a little accommodation for himself which served as a bed. This only aggravated the sufferings of the rest by the comparison, and made us wish we had run any risk on dry ground as preferable to our present situation.

"On the next day the man and his wife and child left the boat, when the company was reinforced by the addition of some other passengers—to wit, a rich priest, a Venetian nobleman and his servant, three of his friends also, and a young man who was a student of the college of Padova. When night came the boat was again tied up till daylight came; luckily for the company, the priest, who did not much like to suffer the misery of spending a night in the boat, went on shore to a house at the side of the river and got a bed for himself and the young

student of Padova. As soon as we heard of this piece of success we went immediately to the same house, which was an inn, and by great persuasions got the people of the inn to turn a poor man who was then sleeping in the house out of his bed, by which means the passengers could all be accommodated. Then, after having refreshed ourselves with a good hot supper, the priest and the student took one bed, which was the best in the house, to themselves, and we went to another room which had two beds in it, though of inferior quality, and thus happily got rid of the inconvenience of the third night.

"The following morning was the beginning of a beautiful day, and we had the pleasure to breakfast at a coffee-house situated on one of those delightful islands which are frequently met with in the vicinity of Venice. At sunset of a fine, calm evening we arrived in the harbour of Venice, where we were visited by the custom-house officers, who unpacked and most minutely examined every trifle that belonged to the strangers, which occasioned much fear to them of losing small articles, and great trouble to repack them. By the assistance of the courier we got good lodgings at an inn, where we remained a few days."

Readers of Horace will recognise many features

in this canal journey; for instance, the boat tied up by night, as it was tied when Horace was hurrying to meet Mæcenas on the way to Brindisi. Italy changes slowly, as travellers still find. But nowadays hardly any one travels; they only go abroad, and one railway carriage or railway hotel is very much like another all the world over. It would not be hard to show that the increased facilities for moving from place to place have lessened our knowledge of foreign countries. Northcote only went abroad once in his life, but he was a more travelled man than half the globe-trotters who winter abroad annually.

"I inquired of the waiter at the inn if it was a fact that in Venice they executed their criminals privately in the prison, and then exposed their bodies in public. I was answered in the affirmative, and on the very next morning the servant came into the room saying, 'You may now see in the piazza of St. Marco a proof of what you inquired yesterday'; which was the fact, as a dead body of a man was there exposed, with a paper on his breast. On this was written in large characters his name and country, to which was added these: 'For treason against the State.'

"A few days after our arrival at Venice, taking a walk about the city, we by chance stopped at a

picture-shop, when the man of the shop, perceiving we were strangers, asked if we were looking for lodgings, because he had two very pretty rooms to let, and went immediately with us to his house to show them. A bargain was soon struck and the lodgings taken. And at this house we remained during the time we spent at Venice. The family were good people, and consisted of the man, who was a sign-painter; his wife and five children, the eldest, a girl about fifteen; a boy, eleven, the others of course younger. The surname of this family was Bossi Bossi.

"Thus three months of the winter of the year 1779 I and my companion spent at Venice, in which time I painted another portrait of myself, according to promise, for the ancient Etruscan Academy of Cortona, and my friend Prince Hoare painted his portrait also, to be sent to Florence, which two portraits were accordingly sent to the care of Signor Gesualdo Ferris, one of the members of the Florentine Academy and a painter.

"Having thus spent a pleasant winter season at Venice in seeing all the works of the Venetian school in that city, together with all the amusements at the Carnival, we determined to set out for England, taking Padova, Verona, and Mantua in their road, and so through the Tyrol, as there was no possibility of returning by the way of France,

England being at that time engaged in a war with that country. We also had a desire to avail ourselves of the opportunity of viewing the splendid collections of pictures at Munich, in Bavaria, Cologne, Dusseldorf, and Antwerp, &c."

"In the beginning of March, on a Wednesday morning," they set out from Venice by passage-boat to Padua; thence to Verona, where they saw Chiniaroli's studio. "He," says Northcote, "composed with much judgment, with grace, and with novelty in his figures, and was superior to his contemporaries—Pompeo Battoni and Mengs—though not equal to his competitor, Tiepolo the Venetian." From Verona they went to Mantua, and thence took the German stage-coach to Augsburg, "a miserable conveyance. It takes six persons and travels all night; the roads are very bad and the carriage jolts exceedingly, being hung by iron bars without any springs." (Springs on carriages were introduced in England as a great novelty in the time of Charles II. Evelyn describes his first experiment of them.)

"This machine," says Northcote, "we were obliged to take, as the vetturini all demanded an extravagant price of us, thinking we were English noblemen because we came into the town in a coach and four not knowing it had been a returned one.

"At Augsburg we saw nothing remarkable but the palace, which is covered with gold instead of tiles, and a magnificent hall in the palace of the Empress-Queen (Maria Theresa), in which are large whole-length portraits of all the children of the Empress, with half-length portraits of their wives and husbands, which hang over the whole-lengths. These are done by the best German painters, and some of the best of them are not absolutely despicable, but only remarkable to travellers as the greatest collection in the world of such near relations who are all sovereigns.

"From this place we continued our journey in a good German post-chaise which took us two posts; the weather was very cold, with much snow. Afterwards we were obliged to go a great way in carriages which do not deserve the name of chaises, as they are without any cover overhead and hung behind with iron bars, and in front are fixed to the fore-wheels by the shafts, and exactly resemble a kind of fish-cart used in England. In those vehicles we were obliged to pass over the snowy mountains, where the cold was intense and the road very bad. One carriage broke down with us in the road at a time when we were at a great distance from any house. But by good luck a carpenter happened to be going with a hatchet in his hand, and he and the driver together, by cutting down

two young fir-trees, repaired the carriage so as to be just able to finish that post.

"We now arrived at Munich, the Court of the Elector of Bavaria, where we were feasted with one of the grandest collections of Flemish pictures in Europe; but to particularise those would be foreign to my present purpose.

"The chief difficulty which we now experienced was the want of language; for as we left Italy by degrees the Italian language was less and less understood, and at all the small post-houses the people were ignorant of the French language; so we were at one place obliged to apply to the book-seller of the town, who was the most learned man in it, and Mr. Hoare explained himself to him in the Latin language, desiring him to inform the postboys of the place to which he intended to go.

"At Munich, in a small chapel of the palace, we were amused to see a vast quantity of gold and silver and jewels which were bestowed to adorn foolish supposed relics, such as the finger of St. Peter, the hand of St. John with which he baptized Christ, some of the blood of Christ, wood of the cross, the veil of the Madonna, &c., &c.

"After we had remained at Munich about five days we set out again on our journey towards England, but still unable to give any directions to

the post-boys, who knew no language but Flemish, of which we knew not a word.

"The road now began to grow very bad, and also much rain fell, when we had no other shelter than our great-coats and an umbrella, being in an open carriage. I cannot but mention the ridiculous figure which a German post-boy makes from his dress. At each post-house they have one large coat of bright-yellow cloth, with an immense black patch on the shoulder to represent an eagle; this coat is made to fit the stoutest man, if such should happen to be the driver, but most commonly it is a boy who drives, so that when he stands on his feet the skirts of this coat trail on the ground; and as the posts in Germany are all under the power of the Emperor this figure of a post-boy when driving thinks himself a man of great importance, and keeps his place exactly in the middle of the road, blowing his horn with great authority, to the great annoyance of all heavy-loaded waggons or carts which he meets or overtakes. These he, with great tyranny, obliges to creep into the hedge, and sometimes they nearly overset to give him way, because he will not bate an inch of his importance to go a little on one side. And thus he goes on, winding his horn, with his carriage and a couple of horses not altogether worth twopence.

"When we were got about three or four posts

from Munich we arrived at the post-house about five o'clock in the afternoon in the latter end of the month of March. The people at this place understood no other language than German, which is commonly the case in the interior parts of Germany and Flanders. But the post-boy who had brought us on to this post had been informed that he was to give the proper directions for our continuation on our journey towards Frankfort, and this precaution we had always taken at those post-houses where the French language was understood, otherwise we would have been in all the difficulties which occur from a total want of language, and which can only be conceived by those who have felt the distressing situation.

"Horses were soon got, and off we set. The road was at first not bad, and the post-boy drove on at a most furious rate as if he had been in apprehension of some great danger to come; but of what sort it was impossible to comprehend, and in vain to inquire, as each party knew not one word of language in common between them. But the first apprehension which struck us was that of robbers, as being most natural.

"This expeditious travelling continued till the day closed in, and it soon after grew quite dark; indeed, it was one of the darkest nights possible, insomuch that it was impossible to distinguish your

hand, but at last we perceived unequivocally that we were in a part of the country that was flooded, and the water came up to the bottom of the chaise, as there had been great rain for some time before. The post-boy had now no other means left but to depend on the horses and trust them to pick out their way, creeping on and feeling out their road up to the belly in water; and in this horrid danger we continued not less than six or eight hours, for we did not get to the end of our stage till between two and three in the morning. It was a situation of the greatest possible danger, for had the horses mistaken their way or had got off the road into a little deeper part of the overflooded country, the whole company must have inevitably perished without a possibility of succour.

"But happily at last, about half a mile before we entered the town[1] which finished this stage, we perceived by the trampling of the horses' hoofs that we were on *terra firma*—a sound of inexpressible comfort to our ears who had got ourselves into this dangerous situation so unnecessarily without one earthly advantage, and only from not having been able to speak the language of the country in which we were travelling; for all this violent expedition was totally unnecessary to us who were at our complete leisure; but the people at the post-house

[1] The town, if I am not mistaken, was Heidelburg.—NORTHCOTE.

did not know but we were flying for our lives, and must have thought as much by sending us off at this perilous rate.

"We were now safely housed, and having made a good supper were provided with beds in the Flemish mode—to wit, a feather bed laid on the floor and another to lay over as a covering without sheets or blankets. I, finding this intolerably hot, shook all the feathers of my cover-lid down to the feet, but before the morning they had reinstated themselves upon my body, so that I was, when I awaked, in a state of perspiration as if I had come out of a hot bath, which much discomposed me thus to waste so much of my strength without any advantage.

"This town was situated on the banks of the Rhine. We now determined to pursue our journey by water, and accordingly hired a boat to ourselves to go down the river to Cologne. The boat which we took was small and covered only by a canvas sail kept up by hoops like an English waggon. It rained most violently the whole of the first day; however, the sail kept us dry, and we lay on straw at the bottom of the boat, and on the first night arrived at Frankfort, where we slept, and set off early on the next morning in the same boat.

"When we had proceeded some way down the river, at about ten o'clock the boatman tied up his

boat at a small town on the banks of the Rhine and went on shore and left his companions in the boat expecting his speedy return, for we were unable to ask him any questions, not knowing the language of the country. The unconscionable villain did not return again till three or four in the afternoon, leaving us poor travellers in this miserable, uncertain state and fearing to leave the boat lest the rogue should return and go without us, and at last, when he did return, we were unable to call him to account for his conduct or even to inquire the cause of such unjust usage. We had bargained for the boat to be at our own pleasure at the place where we took it, and where French was spoken. However, we were obliged to continue our voyage with him, and on the third day from Frankfort arrived at Cologne.

"From Cologne we took chaise, and in two posts came to Dusseldorf, where we were again delighted by a superb collection of pictures by the greatest Flemish masters. We went also to the play and saw Shakspere's tragedy of 'Hamlet' acted in the Flemish language, which to us had a very droll effect.

"We now proceeded on to Antwerp, where we were met by Mr. P. Hoare's elder brother, who came from London to meet him, and continued with us the remainder of our journey.

"From Antwerp we came to Ostend, and getting on board the Ostend packet at four o'clock in the afternoon arrived early on the next morning at Margate, where I and my companions landed and again touched English ground, on the second day of May, 1780, with great joy and struggling which should get first on shore, after an absence of three years.

CHAPTER VII

OUR ARTIST ARRIVES IN LONDON; DIFFICULTIES HE HAD TO ENCOUNTER. HE IS ELECTED TO THE ACADEMY

"I HUSBANDED my expenses during the time I was out of England, but at my return to my native country I was without money, having spent the whole of what I had acquired before by my industry previous to my travels, as none of my time when abroad had been employed to the purpose of getting money, but solely in the way which I thought would most promote my improvement in my art. Literally, I had not two guineas left.

"I had determined to settle myself in London as soon as possible, and therefore at first took a very eligible first floor in at a chemist's house in Old Bond Street at rather a high price, but unfortunately, being totally unknown in town and consequently having no powerful patrons to help me, I found it impossible at first to get even enough to clear my expenses. In order to prevent the neces-

sity I might be under of spending more than I got I made a visit to my native town, where I had immediate employment in portrait painting at the price of eight guineas for a head-size. This prosperity soon emboldened me to take a house in Clifford Street in London, where I proposed to follow portrait painting only. But still I found I could not succeed in London without the help of some active friend or patron, so, being without either in this quarter, and having a great horror of contracting debts, I had no other means left but to make another trial of my friends at Plymouth; but they, seeing that I returned again so soon to my former station, were rather backward in their offers of employment, so very shy are the world of having anything to do with the unfortunate. I failed in the expectations on which rested all my hopes, for the world, who are more governed by whim and caprice than solid judgment, hastily concluded that my not being encouraged in London was a proof of want of ability in my art, and therefore became slack in their desire to encourage or employ me. From this disappointment I returned again to London in a very dejected state of mind. Immediately on my return to town I paid a visit to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who then gave me the first information of the arrival in London of a very powerful rival from my own country,—one who was most

certainly a great genius in his art, namely, John Opie,—and that he was at that very time admired and surrounded and employed by all the principal nobility of England. All this soon proved but too true, for Opie attracted all the attention and patronage of all those of even my friends who otherwise might have assisted me. This unfortunate coincidence of circumstances, happening exactly at the time when I was just struggling to keep myself above water, threw such a damp upon my spirits that I became quite desponding and in ill-health of consequence, as I now concluded for certain that notwithstanding all the sanguine hopes with which I had formerly encouraged myself, and all the labours I had undergone to gain an eminence in my art, I should die neglected and be forgotten and leave the field to my triumphant rival Opie."

Northcote's feelings were embittered at this time by finding one arrayed against him as an enemy who had been his friend in the time when he lived with Reynolds. In these days that eccentric and disreputable genius John Wolcot (better known as Peter Pindar the satirist), had just returned from his stay in Jamaica, where he had been living as physician to the Governor, Sir William Trelawney. As his skill in medicine was dubious, and as Sir William had not succeeded

in finding a bishop willing to ordain him even for the chaplaincy in Jamaica, Wolcot was living by his wits. He was always a dabbler in painting, and wrote at various times a good deal of art criticism, which was perhaps rather energetic in expression than impartial or judicious. He used to call on Northcote and spend whole mornings in his room at Sir Joshua's. At this time, Northcote remarks, "he was totally unknown as a public character." A letter of his, written from Truro, is preserved in the memoir. It contains pretty free references to the extreme frugality which always characterised Northcote; but the impudence of the request with which it concludes is even more typical of John Wolcot than the "rusty head of hair" and the rest were of his correspondent :—

"*To Mr. James Northcote at Sir Joshua Reynolds's.*

"LEICESTER FIELDS, LONDON.

"DEAR NORTHCOTE,—Come out of that d-mn'd p—— Hole or by G—— you'll die, —— much oblig'd t'ye for your compliments on my poetical talent, and yet, my friend, I have received a letter from a very great critic, a letter containing the opinions of other brother critics which I *blush* to relate—when we meet I may show 'em t'ye. I long for a head, I want to improve by it. Take my word for it, Jem, and I do not mean to flatter, the Devil fetch me if I do, you'll be the first

of your profession. Let me mortifie you so far, however, as to say you'll never make a learned painter, but for correctness and colouring, so far as relates to a head (for I can guess at no more of your powers) you will certainly be, notwithstanding that rusty head of hair, lousy blue surtout and ragged breeches which you carry about you, a very great man. In consequence of that idea I shall from time to time present you to the public in a couplet, and arrogate to myself the merit of the first discovery of the talent which will amaze the world. This last speech looks as if I was laughing at you, but seriously I admire your powers! I have sent you a compliment on your picture at the Royal Academy—send it by the Penny Post in a cover to the *St. James's Chronicle* or the *London* or both, that I may see it in print; if you don't I shall be forced to employ somebody else, therefore I beg it as a favour, for I like 'em. You could not steal a little bit of Sir Joshua and send with the head design'd for me, could you? has he no old head of merit lying amongst some old spiders?

"My pen has been riding post over the paper; indeed I am wanted out as we are pleased to express ourselves.

"Therefore, Dear Northcote,

"Adieu,

"J. Wolcot.

"Truro, *May* 22, 1774."

"These are Wolcot's verses on my picture of St. Catherine at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy enclosed in the above letter:—

> "'The human *Face* whilst others humbly paint,
> Northcote's bold art attempts ye Form divine,
> Lo, with each Grace caelestial blooms the Saint
> And like her beauties shows th' immortal Line.
> 'PICTOR.'

"Perhaps it may be unnecessary to observe that I did not send those lines either to the *St. James's Chronicle*, or to the *London*, or to any other."

Whether Northcote's failure to comply with the suggestion that he should steal a sketch of Sir Joshua's made a quarrel or no, is not stated; but Northcote gives an account of Wolcott's relations with Opie, which shows that the critic probably did not propose to puff his friend for nothing.

"It has been sufficiently proved by circumstances that Dr. Wolcot, better known by the appellation of Peter Pindar, was the first discoverer and patron of Opie. He found him by chance in an inferior station of life, when very young, he perceived he was a lad of considerable genius, he took him to his house, forwarded his education, and when he was able to paint a little, brought him up to

London, where he ushered him into the notice of the public by unceasing activity, using every art that ingenuity could suggest to his fertile imagination; and then became a sharer in the profits. Having adopted Opie as his child, and also united him with his interest, Wolcot immediately considered everything as inimical to his good which might in any degree thwart his schemes towards Opie's benefit, and, for these reasons only, became my enemy just as I was struggling to make my way in the world, and not only affected to despise my powers as an artist to the private friends of both, but also writ anonymous critiques against me in the public newspapers, and never ceased doing me ill offices until such time as he and Opie had a violent quarrel on the score of dividing Opie's gains, which at that moment were very great. But that which made me particularly the object of Wolcot's hatred was this. Opie and I came both of us from the West Country, and consequently were both well known to the same persons whose patronage might be of use to us on their entrance into public life; therefore this enmity which would have been but of little consequence to one whose reputation was already established, yet at such a critical moment certainly much increased my difficulties, which were already too numerous for me to encounter."

It would seem that Northcote's indignation was not silent under these wrongs, for in the memoir prefixed to the second series of his "Fables," there is printed an exceedingly belligerent letter from Wolcot, which no doubt reduced the timorous painter at least to momentary acquiescence:—

"Mr. Northcote,—As I have received no answer to my letter, I presume that you plead guilty; since the last, fresh accounts of your freedom of discourse have reached my ears. I have therefore to request, nay, I will venture to insist upon it, that wherever you have declared that I have sent into the country letters, or newspapers, or pieces of newspapers, containing strictures on your paintings (though, indeed, were it a fact, it would contain no great criminality), you will unsay what you have stated, or, in plain English, eat your words. Who your secret good friend is, I neither know nor care about. You will be candid enough to allow that it is high time that little whipper-snapper gentleman, your tongue, should be stopped in his career; he may possibly bring a disgrace to his neighbour nose by his licentiousness.

"J. Wolcot.

"*Friday, Nov.* 7, Great Newport Street.

"To Mr. Northcote,

"Clifford Street, Bond Street."

Northcote, not unnaturally, is silent upon this episode, but he emphasises the "correctness" of his attitude towards Opie.

"It is but justice to remark that, notwithstanding Wolcot's hostilities, and the material effect which this rivalry had in thwarting my interest, yet I always lived on terms of strict friendship with Opie. It is curious to observe the vast changes which frequently happen in the course of a very short period, and this reflection ought always to give us hope even in situations apparently the most forlorn; for in a very little space of time the capricious public, who had so violently admired and employed Opie when he first appeared a novelty amongst them, and was only the embryo of a genius, yet when he had proved himself to be a real artist left him with disgust because he was no longer a novelty. They now looked out only for his defects, and he became in his turn totally neglected and forgotten, and instead of being the sole object of public attention, and having the street where he lived so filled with coaches of the nobility as to be a real nuisance to the neighbourhood, he soon found himself wholly deserted and as if he had been one infected with the plague. Such is the world."

In the "Conversations" Northcote is made to say: "I wish you had known Opie; he was a very original-minded man. Mrs. Siddons used to say, 'I like to meet Mr. Opie; for then I always hear something I did not know before.' I do not say that he was always right; that he always put your thoughts into a new track that was worth following. I was very fond of Opie's conversation; and I remember once when I was expressing my surprise at his having so little of the Cornish dialect, 'Why,' he said, 'the reason was I never spoke at all till I knew you and Wolcot.' He was a true genius."

Almost the first thing that Northcote ever published was an obituary panegyric upon Opie in the *Artist;* and P. G. Patmore, in "My Friends and Acquaintances," quotes his phrase: "Other painters painted to live—Opie lived to paint."

The severity of competition had the effect of turning Northcote's ability into new and more ambitious efforts.

"Being in the awkward state before described, and deprived of all resource in the line of portrait painting, I betook myself from necessity to painting small historical and fancy subjects from the most popular authors of the day, as such subjects are sure of sale amongst the minor print-dealers, being

done in a short time, and for a small price. From those which I executed there are prints taken such as Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey,' the 'Sorrows of Werter,' Gay's pastorals, &c. I did also small pictures, or rather sketches, of the events of the moment, such as at the time were the topics of general conversation. But all this was work against my will, work of necessity, and to me who panted for higher employment but bitter work, and undertaken only from the lack of better commissions.

"The dread of contracting debts deterred me from engaging on any grand works of speculation, till at length my strong desire to do something worthy of myself prevailed and determined me to venture on a large composition which should demand the attention of the public at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. The work which thus I took in hand at a venture, with the hope it might draw to me some attention from the public, was the representation of the miraculous escape of Captain Englefield with twelve of his crew, who were saved in a small boat from the wreck of the *Centaur* man-of-war on their return from Jamaica. There is a very good print done from it. It is a large picture, being twelve feet in length, and now in the possession of the family of the late Earl of Gainsborough, who bought it.

"This was undoubtedly a very proper subject to take up, as it comprised the principal properties at the time I required them—to wit, popularity and interest, from its being a circumstance of recent distress, with grandeur from the awful situation in which they were represented; besides, that it contained the very portraits of the persons it meant to represent, all painted from the life."

Hazlitt, in the "Table Talk," has a lengthy description of this picture interposed in his account of Northcote.

"Sometimes you find him sitting on the floor like a schoolboy at play, turning over a set of old prints; and I was pleased to hear him say the other day, coming to one of some men putting off in a boat from a shipwreck, 'That is the grandest and most original thing I ever did.' This was not egotism but had all the beauty of truth and sincerity. The print was indeed a noble and spirited design. The circumstance from which it was taken happened to Sir Harry Englefield and his crew. He told Northcote the story, sat for his own head, and brought the men from Wapping to sit for theirs; and these he had arranged into a formal composition, till one Jeffrey, a conceited but clever artist of that day, called in upon him, and said, 'Oh! that commonplace thing will never do—it is like West;

you should throw them into an action, something like this.' Accordingly, the head of the boat was reared up like a sea-horse riding the waves, and the elements put into commotion, and when the painter looked at it the last thing as he went out of his room in the dusk of the evening, he said that 'it frightened him.' He retained the expression in the faces of the men nearly as they sat to him. It is very fine, and truly English; and being natural, it was easily made into history. There is a portrait of a young gentleman striving to get into the boat, while the crew are pushing him off with their oars; but at last he prevailed with them by his perseverance and entreaties to take him in. They had only time to throw a bag of biscuits into the boat before the ship went down, which they divided into a biscuit a day for each man, dipping them into water which they collected by holding up their handkerchiefs in the rain and squeezing it into a bottle. They were out sixteen days in the Atlantic, and got ashore at some place in Spain, where the great difficulty was to prevent them eating too much at once, so as to recover gradually. Sir Harry Englefield observed that he suffered more afterwards than at the time; that he had horrid dreams of falling down precipices for a long while after; that in the boat they told merry stories, and kept up one another's spirits as well as they

could, and on some complaint being made of their distressed situation, the young gentleman who had been admitted into their crew remarked, 'Nay, we are not so badly off neither; we are not come to eating one another yet!'"

This success led, as usual, to other commissions of a like nature, and Northcote became an accredited painter of naval scenes. He tells a curious story of the effect produced on his mind by the effort to portray horrors.

"It was at this time that the *Halswell* East Indiaman was unfortunately wrecked on the coast of Dorsetshire, perhaps one of the most distressing and melancholy accidents on record. The captain, Pierce, with his two daughters, two nieces, and several of their friends, perished together. By the desire of the printseller I was requested to make a sketch of this terrible event, in order that a print might be engraved from it by Gilderoy, and a pamphlet was left with me in which was related all the circumstances which were known concerning this deplorable wreck. This I accordingly read with great attention, in order to fix on the most important moment of time to represent on my canvas; but in reading it over for the purpose the ideas were raised so forcibly in my imagination, the

event having been so recent and so awful, that for a week after it never ceased to haunt my mind with gloomy thoughts by day and my sleep at night with frightful dreams of their ghastly ghosts surrounding my bed; and I cursed the hour I was employed to think or paint such a subject of horror. And at the same time I was daily abused in newspapers for my cruelty of heart in selecting such a scene to paint, as if it had been the subject of my own choice. Thus we may see how often authors may have been censured very unjustly for executing of works which necessity alone had obliged them to perform."

At this point the memoir ceases to have any show of being a continuous biography; it becomes merely a connection of more or less disjointed jottings, which have to be pieced together as best they may with notes. They begin with two important statements.

"In the year 1786, on November 13th, I was elected a member of the Royal Academy of London.

"About this time it was that Alderman Boydell's grand scheme of making the Shakspere Gallery and publishing that magnificent edition was set on foot, when I was immediately employed very considerably in that work, as may be seen from the number

of the prints from my pictures for that collection. It will also appear in what rank I stand as to my abilities as an artist.

"However, one of the principal pictures of mine, hat of the 'Murder of the Princes in the Tower,' was painted previously to this scheme and had been some little time in Boydell's possession before the splendid edition of Shakspere had been thought upon. This picture had been publicly exhibited at his house in Cheapside, and it seems not unlikely that this very picture first suggested the scheme to their minds, as it had been greatly noticed and admired. It was the first picture that the Boydells ever had of me, and they had bespoke a companion to it when they first informed me of the Shakspere plan. This picture afterwards sold at the sale of the Shakspere Gallery for three times the price they had paid me for it, and all my other pictures for that work made the highest prices of any in the collection, except those of Sir Joshua Reynolds only.

"I also painted a large picture for the Alderman Boydell; the subject was the death of Wat Tyler, which was presented to the City of London by Boydell when he was the Lord Mayor, and is now placed in the council room at the Guildhall. This picture was exhibited in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1787, and when I entered the door of the Exhibition room and saw it facing me I felt a

shock to find it, as I thought, look much worse than it did when I had it before me in my painting-room. But Sir Joshua, who stood near, came immediately up to me saying, 'I congratulate you on your very fine picture of the "Death of Wat Tyler." However, I was not content with its appearance and worked much on it after it came out of the Exhibition, and made it much better. When Boydell was afterwards Lord Mayor of London he had this picture hung up over his throne in the Egyptian Hall at the Easter feast and ball.

"It was a usual custom with me to take a short walk in the morning between the hours of eight and ten o'clock into the fields for the benefit of air and exercise. One morning, at the time I was employed in painting this large composition of the 'Death of Wat Tyler,' as I was walking alone in the field, a man crossed the field and came up to me, which somewhat discomposed me. I expected to have been robbed, as this was a very ill-looking fellow; however, the man, probably seeing some good reason at the time not to rob, contented himself by only asking alms. I told him I had nothing for him, but that if he would call at my house I would find employment for him, and then gave him my card of direction. Soon after this fellow came, and from him I painted one of Wat Tyler's rebels, and also one of the assassins murdering

Edward the Fifth and his brother in the Tower. This fellow afterwards came to the house so drunk and appeared so very worthless that I forbid his coming any more there again for ever.

"When I had finished the picture of the 'Death of the young King Edward the Fifth and his brother in the Tower,' I had it carried down to show it to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and accompanied it myself. Sir Joshua and his niece, Miss Palmer (since Marchioness of Thomond), were at breakfast in his library when the picture was brought into the room. Sir Joshua looked at it with a kind of indifference, and then bestowed a small portion of commendation on a merit which the picture did not possess by saying, 'Very well drawn.' Now the picture had very little drawing in it as the two children were wrapped in the bed linen and the assassins were clad in armour; however, that was all he said, when if the picture deserved any praise it must have been for the invention and composition. Some years after Sir Joshua's death, Miss Palmer (then Countess of Inchiquin), being in company with me, inquired who now possessed that excellent picture of my painting which her uncle so much admired. I replied that I did not know what picture she could mean, as I did not know that her uncle ever admired any picture of my painting, when she answered that it must surely be mere

affectation in me to say so. 'I mean the "Death of the Children in the Tower," for I am sure,' added she, 'my uncle talked of nothing else but about that picture for the whole day after you showed it to him.' However, this admiration had been carefully concealed from me at the time the picture was shown."

A letter of Samuel Northcote's, dated August 30, 1789, gives a favourable report from the artist's chief patron. "Hunt," he says, "dined last Thursday with Dr. Farr, and after dinner the Doctor, discoursing of painting, 'Taste, Shakespere, and the Musical Glasses,' said that Cooper (who teached the principles of drawing) had told him that he had heard Boydell say, It was more his interest to employ you than any one painter who had exhibited in the Gallery, as your pictures were the most admired of all there; and that he would rather give you a great price than anybody. One can hardly conceive what should induce him to say the latter part of this; however, Cooper said something of this kind no doubt to the Doctor, and Dr. Farr told Hunt that he did not imagine that your abilities were so good, and that he thought that when you went abroad you might better have stayed at home with Sir Joshua."

At the end of 1789 Northcote left his house

in Clifford Street and removed into a larger one in Argyll Street. This house he afterwards bought, and lived in it till 1822, when he removed to 8, Argyll Place, where he remained till his death.

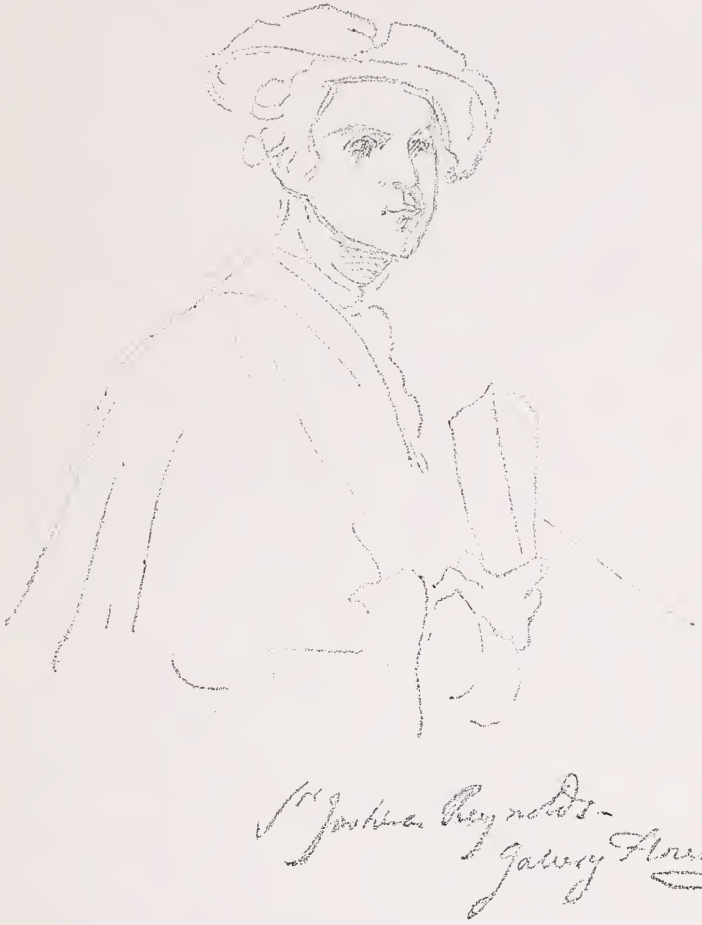
CHAPTER VIII

COMMOTIONS IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY; THE PRESIDENT RESIGNS, ETC. CHARACTER OF REYNOLDS

IN the memoir of Northcote which appeared after his death in the *Gentleman's Magazine* it is observed that he maintained a kind of proprietary right in Reynolds and suffered no one to abuse him —except himself. The estimate which is given in this chapter is probably the fullest expression of Northcote's feeling which has been printed. A good deal of that feeling is expressed in a remark quoted by Leslie from a note of conversations with Northcote kept by Ward the painter. This record has never been published, but Leslie and Taylor had access to it when writing their Life of Reynolds.

"If Sir Joshua," said Northcote to Ward, "had come into the room when I was at work for him, and had seen me hanging by the neck, it would not have troubled him."

Something of that abiding resentment against


Mrs Joshua Reynolds
Sarah Siddons

Reynolds for his constitutional coldness of disposition makes itself felt through all the perfectly genuine admiration which was Northcote's attitude towards his old master. But it did not prevent him from siding loyally with the President in the famous quarrel which he recounts as follows :—

"In the year 1790 a very memorable event took place in the history of the Royal Academy ; which was that of the President, Sir Joshua Reynolds, resigning his seat and all future connection with the Academy with a degree of disgust against them which many members thought he carried too far. The cause of this event may be thus explained :—

"Sir Joshua Reynolds was very anxious to procure the vacant professorship of perspective in the Academy for Mr. Bonomi, an Italian architect" (who originally came to London to decorate buildings for the famous brothers Adam) ; "and as that artist was not an Academician it became a necessary step to raise him to that situation in order to qualify him for the office to which Sir Joshua wished to elevate him. The President therefore determined to obtain his election as an Associate on the first opportunity, and then to avail himself of the earliest vacancy to get him chosen an Academician—the appointment of the professorship was then of course to follow. To do Sir

Joshua all justice, it cannot be denied that Mr. Bonomi was most excellently qualified for the office ; but in the present instance there was an Englishman who was already an Associate, and had supplied the vacant chair of the professor of perspective for a considerable time with ability and general approbation. This person was Mr. Edwards, and he had a party determined to support him.

" On the evening of the election for an Associate the numbers on the ballot proved equal, and the President gave the casting-vote for his friend Mr. Bonomi, who was thereby advanced so far towards the professorship that he was promised it on the vacancy of an Academic seat by the death of Mr. Meyers. Sir Joshua Reynolds exerted all his influence to obtain this for his friend, as the final qualification for the office to which he had destined him. But a spirit of resistance appeared which made him tremble for the success of his design.

" On the evening of the election he had ordered certain drawings of his favourite candidate to be placed in the council room for the inspection of the electors. The President then placed those drawings with his own hands on the table and acknowledged they were brought to the council room by his orders, when it was suggested by one of the members that they were assembled to elect an Academician and not a professor of perspective, and

that consequently the introduction of the drawings then before them was a premature, a partial, and an unjust measure which he should oppose by moving that they be immediately removed.

"Mr. Barry most warmly controverted this proposition. The motion, however, was carried; the drawings were of course removed, and Mr. Fuseli was elected an Academician by a majority of two to one. The President then quitted the chair with an air of indignant dissatisfaction, and, as it afterwards appeared, with a determination never to resume it.

"On the following day, as I have been credibly informed, he sent a letter of resignation to the Secretary of the Academy, which, from the intemperate language of it, he was persuaded to withdraw, and another to the same effect, but written in terms that approached somewhat nearer to moderation, was substituted in its stead. And this resolution which he had taken he was determined to maintain, although the wishes of the King that he should recall his resignation were conveyed to him in the most flattering manner.

"In this abandoned state the Academy remained for a short space of time, and much heat was generated in some of the party which were against Sir Joshua, and pamphlets were published with violent abuse of Sir Joshua and his principal friends, who were Barry, Opie, and myself. One of those

publications gives their characters, which I shall insert for the amusement of the reader. It says: As these men are the only avowed and clamorous champions of his cause, I shall beg leave to consider how far they do honour to it, and what rank they are entitled to hold in Sir Joshua's profession.

"'Barry has not an eye for colour, or he considers it as beneath his notice. Not one solitary example of tolerable colouring has been produced by his pencil. It should seem as if the only patches on his pallet were white burnt-umber and terre-verte. His compositions are in general as eccentric as himself, but his design is oftentimes good and frequently possesses somewhat of style and grandeur. He has studied the antique and understands it. Indeed, it is the only branch of his art for which he has any feeling; and when he is engaged in subjects where he cannot apply it he sinks into the lowest rank of artists. It is then that he paints such pictures as the "Death of General Wolfe" and "Dr. Burney Sporting with the Water Nymphs." Yet this is the man who, with a degree of arrogance which no knowledge or talents can justify, holds himself forth as a painter of the first class, and as a writer of the first genius, as a man of candour and elegance, of justice and moderation.

"'The lectures which he delivers as professor of

painting in the Royal Academy are blessed with all the peculiarities of his character. Amongst other advantages which the academic students may reap from them, they are laboriously instructed to hold in contempt the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds; and there is one lecture so expressly calculated to depreciate and ridicule the talents and genius of the late President, that he has always thought it prudent to absent himself from the Academy on the evening of its delivery; yet this is the man who now is become as violent in the praise, and mean in the adulation of, Sir Joshua as he had formerly been in abusing and insulting him. I rejoice in the conversion, but, in the cant of Methodism, I am afraid of his being reconverted. Nay, it is by no means improbable that the man who now mourns over the President's chair may hereafter be seen to stamp upon his grave.

"'I cannot mention Messrs. Opie and Northcote, the other component parts of this respectable trio, in any other view than as mere painters who are taught, as I suppose, by their leader to lament the tottering state of the Royal Academy, and to threaten that they will complete the downfall of its dignity by withdrawing themselves from its councils.

"'Opie is heavy, unelegant, and accidental in his characters. If the blackguard from whom he paints happens to possess a head that hits his

fancy he imitates it without anything like discrimination. His David Rizzio is a dirty drayman, his Mary Queen of Scots a common barrow-woman, and her lady of honour a furious lady of the town. Yet the execution of them is bold and natural as far as relates to simple imitation; for to that alone are the works of his pencil confined. He has not a mind to go beyond it.

"'The costive brains of Northcote, after much laborious exertions, produce a work perhaps of some effect, but without taste, genius, or elegance; as he pretends to despise the rules of art, he proceeds in defiance of them. His best heads are those of assassins and tyrants, which is rather an unfortunate circumstance, as he is generally said to paint them from his own.

"'It is said that these painters have the following peculiar method of composing their subjects. They paint a great variety of heads on separate pieces of paper, which they fix on their picture, and they fasten that which happens to suit their taste in a hole cut in the place it is intended to occupy. If the account of this ingenious contrivance should be a misrepresentation it may be easily confuted, but if it should be a fact it ought to be made known, for the advancement and honour of the art.

"'I am disposed to amuse myself with the expectation that these three great artists will

employ their united powers in painting the Apotheosis of the late President. The upper part of the picture, where Sir Joshua will be borne in due solemnity to the skies, must be consigned to the sublime genius of Mr. Barry. The lower part of the canvas, offering a view of hell, with the academicians who voted against Mr. Bonomi grinning in torments, must owe all its horrors to the damning pencils of Messrs. Opie and Northcote, and if they should want a fiend or two to complete the whole, they may sit to each other. Mr. Fuseli will then, I trust, revenge the treatment of his friends by painting a scene in "Measure for Measure," where he will represent the three foregoing painters as inhabitants of the "thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice."'

"Mr. Fuseli," comments Northcote, "is shrewdly suspected of having had a considerable hand in composing the pamphlet from which the above extracts are copied.

"The rebellious academicians, soon finding it too disgraceful for them to be without Sir Joshua at their head, submitted to entreat him in the humblest manner again to take the chair, which he kindly condescended to do, and held it till his death."

An extract from a letter of Samuel Northcote's to

his brother expresses what was, no doubt, a general feeling at the time. Reynolds had had a stroke of palsy in 1789, and was totally prevented from painting by the *gutta serena*, which destroyed his eyesight.

"*March* 28, 1790.

"I was very much surprised to find that Sir Joshua had returned to the Royal Academy again. He left it in his full splendour, and for a good reason, and, as the Academy must decline as Boydell advances, Sir Joshua's leaving it at this time would have made a remarkable era in the history of the Academy; but now, as he can no longer keep up the credit of the exhibitions by his painting, and having exhausted the subjects of his lectures cannot heighten his credit in that way, I conceived that he did not, like the Bishop of Granada, require a Gil Blas to tell him when it was time to leave off."

Northcote has no further event to chronicle till he comes to the death of Sir Joshua, which he follows by a full and impartial criticism. It is evident that this represents his complete view; his published biography of Sir Joshua omits the whole *per contra* side of the estimate.

"In this year, 1792, on the 23rd of February,

died Sir Joshua Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy, in the sixty-ninth year of his age ; the most illustrious artist that this nation had ever produced, and one who might have been the ornament of any country in the world. But there are defects as well as perfections in the most faultless of human beings, and he was not without them. Therefore in this place it may not be improper to give a summary of his character both as a man and as a painter as it appeared to me who knew him.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds, like a man of a great mind, always cultivated the intimacy and friendship of all the learned and all the great of his time, and often assisted those who were in difficulties both with his advice and his purse.

"He was a man of general information, with a candour in which he knew how to clothe his opinions ; a manner of behaviour the most amiable possible. His disposition was also courtly, and he had a desire to pay all due respect to persons in superior stations, and he certainly contrived to move in a sphere of society in which no other painter was seen to accompany him, and amongst those he was known only as an artist of superior talents and as a man of the most mild and pleasing demeanour. They who never saw him in any other position were justified in supporting the eulogiums which it was the fashion amongst the

elegant literate, both male and female, to pass upon him.

"The opinion he has given of Raphael may with justice be applied to himself, that his materials were generally borrowed, but the noble structure was his own. No one ever appropriated the ideas of others to his own purpose with more skill than Sir Joshua. He possessed the alchemy of painting by converting, as it were, whatever he touched into gold. From a wooden print at the top of a halfpenny ballad he would form a very beautiful picture.

"The works of Parmigiano in particular have proved an exhaustless mine to him, and afforded much of that grace which so eminently distinguished his female portraits. In short, there is no one painter that ever went before him but he has with an exquisite taste and selection gained some advantage from.

"The compositions of his portraits are unquestionably excellent, those of his history defective, as they often consist of borrowed parts not always suited to each other. Since in his general practice he had little or no occasion for anatomical knowledge, he never applied himself to the acquisition of it; when, however, some attention to this branch of service was necessary to his historical subjects, it was his custom to have recourse to prints, from whence he borrowed as his judgment or fancy

directed him; and though they were both of a superior cast, yet the possible arrangement upon such principles could never produce that entire whole which constitutes the merit of a perfect composition. For similar reasons he is equally deficient in design.

"In light and shade, in colouring and expression, he stands without a rival: his lights display the drawing he knows, and the shades conceal his defects.

"Whether we consider the power, the form, or the brilliance of his lights, the transparency and depth of his shadows with the just quantities of each, and the harmony, richness, and full effect of the whole, I am most willing to declare that in my opinion he has not only far transcended every modern master, but that his excellence in these captivating parts of painting vie with the works of the great models he has emulated.

"To the grandeur, the truth, and simplicity of Titian he has united the chasteness and delicacy of Vandyke with the daring strength of Rembrandt. Delighted with the picturesque beauties of Rubens, he was the first that attempted a bright and gay background, and, defying the dull and ignorant rules of his masters, he at a very early period of his life emancipated his art from the shackles with which it had been encumbered in the school of Hudson;

indeed, from the time he left it I have reason to believe that he very rarely, if ever, copied a single picture of any master. Imitate them all he certainly did, and his versatility in this respect is equalled only by the susceptibility of his feelings, the quickness of his comprehension, and the ardour which prompted his efforts.

"His principal aim, however, was colour and effect, which he always varied as the subject required, and right judgment, which accompanied him in the business of obscuring with shadow those parts he could not draw, assisted him in adopting such pictures for imitation as were congenial to the character he was about to represent. This practice is evident in almost every production of his pencil, but it should be at the same time observed that, though a servile imitator of forms, he never adopted more than the general character of colour; for knowledge of forms is only to be acquired by continual practice, and Sir Joshua had never taken the trouble to acquire it, while the power of colouring may be obtained by the more tranquil operations of reason and observation; and it is a principle common to our art, and of course known to every artist, that the mass of colour which predominates in a picture is, as it were, a key for every other part of it. Hence it appears that whatever deficiencies there may be in the design of this

great master, no painter of any period better understood the principles of colouring, and that he has carried that branch of his art to a very high degree of perfection.

"As for his portraits, those of dignified characters have a certain air of grandeur, and those of women and children possess a grace, beauty, and simplicity which have been seldom equalled and never surpassed; and though sometimes in his attempts to give character where it did not exist he has lost likeness, the deficiencies of the portrait were often compensated by the beauty of the picture.

"As a critic—I speak of professional criticism—he was frequently mistaken, and sometimes prejudiced. But his lectures possess great merit; his observations on the old masters are equally just and ingenious. Some branches of his theory are treated with judgment and ability. Nevertheless Sir Joshua has been known to purchase copies instead of originals, and to deviate in his own practice from those instructions of his Academic chair which are to guide the students of the present period.

"With respect to his contemporary artists, he was ever cautious while they were living both of praise and censure. Like the Egyptians of old he waited till death had consigned a brother painter to the tomb before he ventured to try

his living merits. Sir Joshua certainly procured for the professors of the arts a consequence and a reception which they did not possess, with but a very few exceptions, before the period in which he first rose to eminence.

"It is very certain that at the establishment of the Royal Academy he was the most fit, if not the only person properly qualified, every circumstance considered, to be the President of it; and from his professional rank, his large fortune, the circle of society in which he moved, and the manner in which he lived, as well as the personal consequence attached to the presidential chair, he naturally and properly possessed a certain leading influence in the councils of the Royal Academy. But some traits in his character can best be described by negatives. He was diametrically the reverse to what we call a coxcomb or an egotist. He certainly did not overrate one single excellence which he possessed, nor, as far as one can judge, did he even think as high of his abilities as most others did; and this undervaluing of himself is some excuse for that fear and jealousy which he certainly felt towards all those whose merits he thought put his own superiority in danger. This fear he artfully endeavoured to hide by lavishly bestowing patronage and assistance on those whom he was sure could never interfere with

himself, that he might by this means appear to the world as a patron of the arts without the risk of hurt to himself.

"But the principal drawback on his character, besides this selfishness, was a want of that firm and manly courage and honour which is so absolutely necessary to the highest degree of rectitude.

"He certainly was very deficient in making scholars; for although he had a great many under him who lived in his house for years, yet their names we shall never hear of, and he gave himself not the least trouble about them or their fate. It was his opinion that a genius could not be depressed nor any instruction make a painter of a dunce, so he left them to chance and their own endeavours. Indeed it may be said of him that all the excellence which he possessed he could not teach, and all that can be taught he had never learned, as his superiority was that of genius, and in all that part in the education of a painter which is to be got in academies he was very deficient. What the true reason was that none of his pupils should succeed or be known in the art I cannot say; perhaps one reason may be that many painters must be bred before you find one who will be successful; but it seems by experience that he was not the master to produce good scholars, as most of his could never get a decent livelihood, but lived in poverty and died

in debt, miserable to themselves and a disgrace to the art. I alone escaped this severe fate.[1]

"The very little desire which Sir Joshua Reynolds had for the advancement of the higher branches of his art, or of its professors, the following anecdote may serve to illustrate :—

"During the year that Alderman Boydell was Lord Mayor of London I met him (Boydell) at dinner at the house of Nichol, the King's bookseller, and happening to sit next to him we spoke of the arts, and Boydell expressed the very great desire he had ever retained to promote it by every possible means of encouragement in his power. He said he had often attempted to introduce it to be a fixed custom that every new Lord Mayor of the City of London should be obliged to order a large historical picture of an appropriate subject from one of the best painters of the time, who should be a member of the Royal Academy, and then present this picture

[1] It is interesting to compare with this a passage in the "Conversations": "The same thing, however (his 'strong and peculiar feeling of nature)', made him a very bad master. He knew nothing of rules, which alone are to be taught; and he could not communicate his instinctive feeling of beauty or character to others. I learnt nothing from him while I was with him; and none of his scholars (if I may except myself) ever made any figure at all. He only gave us his pictures to copy."

Hazlitt puts Northcote's idea into much better language than Northcote could command; but the idea, a subtle and just one, is undoubtedly Northcote's.

to the City, either to adorn the Mansion House or else the Hall of that particular company to which he might belong. "'Then,' said the liberal old Boydell, 'you would be fully employed and the arts advanced in this kingdom.' I praised his noble intentions and the friendship shown towards me in particular, and added that I was very sensible how great a friend he had always shown himself to the art and artists. 'Yet,' said Boydell, 'when I told this my intention to Sir Joshua Reynolds he did not accord with me, but said it was a foolish scheme, because aldermen do not understand history painting; they can only judge of a likeness, "therefore," said Sir Joshua, "it should be portraits only for them, and you should begin yourself by giving your own portrait, painted by Lawrence, and make an agreement with him to paint them always at the same price he now has, because his terms will in future be much higher."'

"These sentiments from Sir Joshua were to me a great surprise and mortification, as it proved Sir Joshua's want of friendship to myself particularly, and that it militated much against the mass of art at large thus to have history painting thrown aside for portrait.

"A very few days after this conversation had passed I met with Mr. Desanfans, who was then speaking of the very high regard which Sir Joshua always expressed to have for me, and this opinion

being warmly urged induced me to relate the foregoing conversation. Mr. Desanfans a few days after related it to Sir Joshua when he met him at a dinner. This produced the following billet, which was brought by Sir Joshua's footman at breakfast time :—

"*To James Northcote, Esqr.*

"Argyll Street, *March* 26, 1791.

"Dear Sir,—Mr. Desanfans told me yesterday a most extraordinary story, that the Lord Mayor should say to me that he had an intention of introducing whole-length portraits of Lord Mayors into the Mansion House, and that he added he intended to employ Northcote and Opie, and that I advised him not to employ them but Mr. Lawrence.

"The reason of my mentioning this to you is in hopes that you will help me in endeavouring to trace this story to its fountain-head.

"'If my opinion is considered as of any value, it is certainly your interests to detect this mischief-maker ; I am far from thinking that the Lord Mayor is the author.

"I am, &c.,

"Yours sincerely,

"J. Reynolds."

"This cavalier note I read with surprise, and gave the servant a verbal answer that I would wait on Sir Joshua immediately. I felt myself in a very great dilemma, for though I firmly believed that what Boydell had told me was a truth, yet I knew that Sir Joshua would be mortified to have it publicly known, and might perhaps deny his having said it, and on an appeal to Boydell I feared that he, to pay homage to Sir Joshua as the greatest man, and knowing that it would please him, might deny having said any such thing, and so, according to the old proverb, the weakest must go to the wall. I resolved within myself, if such was the case to have taken my oath to the truth of my having heard from Boydell words to that effect, and I would have insisted on taking this oath to Boydell himself as a magistrate.

"But no such awful encounter was to happen, for when I entered Sir Joshua's breakfast-room he received me with all the mildness possible, when I, impatient to clear myself, related the fact as before seen. Sir Joshua seemed to shrink from it, and only could vindicate himself by asking if it was not very extraordinary that he, who had in all his discourses and writings so much insisted on the dignity of history painting, should be accused of acting so much the reverse to all he had said. All this I allowed, but still insisted on the truth of my

having heard this from Boydell: but Sir Joshua never denied his having said it nor offered to appeal to Boydell for truth of the matter and soon dropped it and talked of indifferent things; but that which gave me most concern was that as Sir Joshua knew it to be truth he was not able to forgive himself, and that he would have ill-will against me for knowing it; for as the old proverb says—

> "'Forgiveness to the injured does belong
> For they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong.'

And thus was for ever destroyed a pleasure which I always had from the conversation of a man of Sir Joshua's high abilities, and who till this moment perhaps never knew that I had discovered the least fault in his character or conduct, for we always hate those who we think have any reason to despise us."

The story bears all the marks of truth, especially in the extreme good sense of the remark attributed to Reynolds upon Boydell's appalling scheme; also, one must admit, in the frank account given by Northcote of his own timidity and readiness to impute low motives.

Mr. Desanfans who is mentioned was a Frenchman who came to England to teach French, but made a lucky investment in one of Claude's pictures, became a dealer and got a commission from

Stanislaus of Poland to buy up works of art from the French nobles in distress during the Revolution. Unluckily the partition of Poland supervened and Desanfans was left with his purchases on his hands. He held a public exhibition of them and issued a descriptive catalogue, which is his claim to be remembered. His pictures he left to a friend, who subsequently transmitted them to Dulwich School, and they became the basis of the Dulwich Gallery.

"The acuteness of the ready wit of Sir Joshua may be seen in the following anecdote:—

"When he drew the portrait of Fox, first Lord Holland, the picture being finished, Lord Holland asked him what his price was for it, and being informed the astonished Lord exclaimed with much surprise at its greatness, at the same time saying, 'You get your money very quick, for it did not take you much time. How long was you about this picture?' when Sir Joshua quickly answered, 'All my life.'"

(This saying recalls an epigram uttered by Mr. Whistler on one of his numerous appearances in the witness-box.)

"The following maxim of La Rochefoucauld may with the strictest justice be applied to Sir Joshua Reynolds:—

"The height of ability consists in a thorough

knowledge of the real value of things, and of the genius of the age we live in.

"The famous Charles James Fox, in discoursing once with Sir Joshua Reynolds on the merits and demerits of Shakespere, said that it was his opinion that Shakespere's credit would have been higher if he had never written the play of 'Hamlet,' saying it was a pity he ever did it. This anecdote was told to me by Sir Joshua himself. My own opinion of this matter is that if there is one play of Shakespere's which denotes genius above the rest it is that of 'Hamlet,' in which is displayed such an infinite niee discrimination of character, such feeling, and rendered so exquisitely interesting, yet without the help of a regular plot, almost without a plan, and so like nature itself, that it becomes an entire effusion of genius alone.

"Count d'Adhémar, the French ambassador, at his house in London had two portraits: one of the late unfortunate Queen of France, the other of Madame Polignac, her favourite. These were by the hand of Madame le Brun, a favourite paintress of the Court of France. When d'Adhémar quitted England and his house was shown publicly, the nobility flocked to see those two portraits, and it was the fashion to admire them with the most extravagant praise, although they were but of a very common degree in art. These Sir Joshua

also went to see, and one day soon after, as he was speaking of them to a gentleman in my presence, I took the opportunity of asking his opinion of them, saying, 'I am glad to find you have seen them, as I shall now be able to have your opinion of them. Pray, what do you think of them?'

"'Why, that they are very fine,' said Sir Joshua.

"'Very fine, do you think?' I returned. 'How fine?'

"'As fine as any painter.'

"'As fine as any painter, do you say? What do you mean? Living or dead?'

"'Living or dead.'

"'Good God! What, as fine as Vandyke?'

"'Yes, and finer.'

"At this time Sir Joshua had some hopes given him of being sent for from the Court of France to paint the Queen's portrait, but it never came to maturity."

Marie Louise Vigée, afterwards Madame le Brun, was born in 1755, the daughter of a painter. She was obliged to paint for her living, and at an early age was fortunate enough to attract the notice of Marie Antoinette, whose portrait she painted first in 1779 and twenty-four times afterwards. Her husband, Jean Baptiste le Brun, was a painter and picture-dealer; he was grand-nephew to Charles le

Brun, acknowledged head of the French school of painting in the days of Mazarin and Colbert. Madame le Brun left France in 1789—more fortunate than her royal patroness—and lived to return there in 1815, when she became a popular figure in Parisian society.

"The old Duchess of Bedford came to Sir Joshua to see the portrait of her daughter, the Duchess of Marlborough, whom Sir Joshua had painted. When it was shown to the old Duchess she said to Sir Joshua that it was not a likeness of her daughter. Sir Joshua bowed, and, pretending not to hear her distinctly, answered that he was very happy that the picture met with her Grace's approbation. 'No, Sir Joshua, I do not think it has the least likeness.' Still he would not hear her justly, but again returned an answer as if he had properly received a compliment on the picture. The Duchess at last left him without taking the trouble to come to an explanation, in despair of making herself to be understood.

"It has often been conjectured that Sir Joshua was not the author of the discourses which he delivered at the Royal Academy, but these notions I reject. I have heard him frequently walking in his room, as if in meditation, till one and two in the morning; on the following morning, before

Sir Joshua has been stirring, I have seen the papers which he had been composing the night before; I have had the manuscript from Sir Joshua in his handwriting to copy out fair for him to read from in public. I have seen the manuscript also after it had been revised by Dr. Johnson, and remember to have seen where Johnson has made nonsense of it from his total ignorance of the art on which it was written, but I never saw, to my knowledge, the mark of Burke's pen on any of the manuscripts, and it was Burke's assistance which is principally suspected.

"I remember one morning in particular, after Sir Joshua had been studying till very late the preceding night, that Burke paid him a morning visit; I was in the adjoining room, and could easily overhear their conversation. Sir Joshua read aloud to Burke the following paragraph of his discourse of December 10, 1774: 'Like a sovereign judge and arbiter of art, he is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school, selects both from what is great and what is little; brings knowledge from the east and from the west, making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind and enriching his works with originality and variety of inventions.' Burke commended it in the highest terms, saying, 'This is indeed excellent; nobody can mend it, no man could say it better.'

"Yet I cannot but contemplate with wonder that a man whose time was almost wholly taken up in the practical acquirement of one art alone, and who, from education, was by no means to be ranked as a man of literature, should compose such prose as some good judges have pronounced to be among the highest examples in the English language.

"It is also certain that Sir Joshua was a man who at all times would assist himself by every laudable expedient. It is also very certain that Burke could, if required, have given him the greatest assistance in strength and elegance of language, together with a literary and professional appearance to his writings, although the thoughts might be wholly his own.

"It is also very certain that Burke had the greatest obligations to Sir Joshua, who had at different times lent him large sums of money, which were never paid, and given to him at his death. And certain it is that Burke, from sense of obligation, had procured him connections with the highest persons of the kingdom, from whom he also got employment.

"Yet if Burke did assist him in his writings, it must have been managed with consummate art and secrecy on both sides.

"Miss Reynolds says she knows the discourses were always shown in the manuscript to Burke.

"That Sir Joshua's genius was fully equal to have produced the intellectual part of his writings there can be no question; his pictures prove it, as also his conversation to those who had the happiness to personally know him; but the air of literature which they are said to possess is surprising."

To this elaborate pronouncement on Sir Joshua's character should be added a passage in the "Conversations":—

"I (Hazlitt) said Hunt had been spoiled by flattery when he was young. 'Oh! no,' he said, 'it was not that. Sir Joshua was not spoiled by flattery, and yet he had as much of it as anybody need have; but he was looking to see what the world said of him, or thinking what figure he should make by the side of Correggio or Vandyke, not pluming himself on being a better painter than some one in the next street, or being surprised that the people at his own table spoke in praise of his pictures. It is a little mind that is taken up with the nearest object, or puffed up with immediate notice; to do anything great we must look out of ourselves and see things upon a broader scale.'"

There is also an admirable commendation of the artist.

"If I was to compare him (Reynolds) with Vandyke and Titian, I should say that Vandyke's

portraits are like pictures (very perfect ones, no doubt), Sir Joshua's like the reflection in a looking-glass, and Titian's like the real people. There is an atmosphere of light and shade about Sir Joshua's which neither of the others have in the same degree, together with a vagueness that gives them a visionary and romantic character, and make them seem to be dreams or vivid recollections of persons we have seen. I never could mistake Vandyke's for anything but pictures, and I go up to them to examine them as such; when I see a fine Sir Joshua I can neither suppose it to be a mere picture nor a man, and I almost involuntarily turn back to ascertain if it is not some one behind me reflected in the glass. When I see a Titian I am riveted to it, and I can no more take my eye off from it than if it were the very individual in the room."

One may sum up Northcote's testimony by saying that he felt for the genius of Reynolds an unqualified admiration and for his character a qualified esteem. But there was no doubt in his mind that among artists of that period Reynolds stood alone. Is it in charity or contempt that he abstains from putting his successor into any comparison with him?

"On the death of Sir Joshua Mr. West was thought to be the most fit person to succeed to the

chair of the Royal Academy, and with great propriety on many accounts. First, the rank he held in the arts; his station as an historical painter to the King, with the partial favour of his sovereign which he was known to possess; and, above all, his superior knowledge of design—all these claims rendered his election unanimous. However, I think it but right that I should in this place give what I take to be his just character as a painter.

"The invention of Mr. West, if I may use the expression, has no other object but mere composition. Justness of character, fine sentiment, and the variety of expression necessary to represent the human passions, all of which are so essential to make a picture interesting, are either totally neglected or not understood by him. Sir Joshua Reynolds contended that there was no such thing as genius. Mr. West may therefore avail himself of that opinion, on the principle that we can have no occasion for a thing that does not exist. He is perfectly satisfied when he perceives that his composition is according to the rules of art, which no one understands better than himself. If his light makes a pleasant shape, and the whole has a strikingly pretty effect on the eye, at the first *coup d'œil* his object is attained.

"In design he is superior to every modern artist; no one can draw with more accuracy from

his model; but unfortunately that model is always common nature, even for the most exalted subjects. He does not attempt at style, properly so called; neither does he select, combine, or diversify; and, so far from approaching with awful step the Grecian school, he has never produced a single picture which could induce any one to imagine that he understood its principles.

"His colouring is crude and unharmonious, his shadows are black and earthy, and his outline hard and dry. His colours, however, are always weighed out, and distributed about his picutre in the nicest proportions. In short, it may be said of Mr. West, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed of Carlo Maratti, 'that he has no great defects nor any striking beauties.'

* * * * *

"I cannot consider this long digression, together with many more in this memoir, as wholly impertinent; it is surely necessary in the life of any man to give the reader an idea of those characters of eminence with whom he had to contend for the claim of excellence."

It will not be amiss to quote from Hazlitt's "Table Talk" an amusing sketch of Sir Joshua's successor.

"Compared to either of these artists (Northcote

or Fuseli) West, the late President of the Royal Academy, was a thoroughly mechanical and commonplace person—a man 'of no mark or likelihood.' He too was small, thin, but with regular, well-formed features, and a precise, sedate, self-satisfied air. This, in part, arose from the conviction in his own mind that he was the greatest painter, and consequently the greatest man, in the world; kings and nobles were common, everyday folks, but there was but one West in the many-peopled globe. If there was any one individual with whom he was inclined to share the palm of undivided superiority, it was with Bonaparte. When Mr. West had painted a picture he thought it was perfect. He had no idea of anything in the art but rules, and these he exactly conformed to; so that, according to his theory, what he did was quite right. He conceived of painting as a mechanical or scientific process, and had no more doubt of a face or a group in one of his high ideal compositions being what it ought to be, than a carpenter has that he has drawn a line straight with a ruler and a piece of chalk, or than a mathematician has that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones.

"When Mr. West walked through his gallery, the result of fifty years' labour, he saw nothing, either on the right or the left, to be added or taken

away. The account he gave of his own pictures, which might seem like ostentation or rhodomontade, had a sincere and infantine simplicity in it. When some one spoke of his 'St. Paul' shaking off the serpent from his arm (at Greenwich Hospital, I believe) he said, 'A little burst of genius, sir!' West was one of those happy mortals who had not an idea of anything beyond himself or his own actual powers and knowledge. I once heard him say in a public room that he thought he had quite as good an idea of Athens, from reading the travelling catalogues of the place, as if he had lived there for years. I believe this was strictly true, and that he would have come away with the same slender, literal, unenriched idea of it as he went. Looking at a picture of Rubens, which he had in his possession, he said with great indifference, 'What a pity that this man wanted expression!' This natural self-complacency might be strengthened by collateral circumstances of birth and religion. West, as a native of America, might be supposed to own no superior in the commonwealth of art; as a Quaker, he smiled with sectarian self-complacency at the objections that were made to his theory or practice in painting. He lived long in the firm persuasion of being one of the elect among the sons of fame, and went to his final rest in the arms of immortality. Happy error! Enviable old man!"

CHAPTER IX

MISCELLANEOUS GOSSIP.

THIS chapter must begin with Northcote's estimate of himself; and to preserve the air of judicial solemnity with which it is written, it is left in the third person.

"Although the works of Northcote were generally approved of by the judicious, yet he never had much employment in historical painting, as it was not to the taste of the English nation, who are best pleased with more gay and trivial subjects than those which it was his pleasure to paint, and he disdained to gain patronage by the arts of servility or fawning. The honest heart, like the strong mind, scorns to assist itself by mean or feeble props; for it may be observed that the idle, the ignorant, and the vain, of whom the bulk of mankind are composed, most commonly bestow their hasty patronage on something which appears

to them to be an object of wonder, and by their hasty applause they are often imposed upon by the artful, whose fortunes they frequently make before the trick is discovered; and even when by chance they have bestowed their favour on a just claimant, still they have seldom done it from either a wise or a just motive, but have been led to it by some phantom of fashion, some accidental accompaniment of that real merit which it possessed, which real merit most probably would have been overlooked had it not been commended by its trivial attendant.

"This knowledge and opinion of mankind it was which prompted even Sir Joshua Reynolds, great as his abilities were, to stoop to little arts to gain popularity, wisely foreseeing that even the greatest genius may be disregarded and neglected without such helps as are necessary to gain over the vulgar world; and that, however mortifying this truth may be to great minds, yet they must remember that even the highest genius must submit to court those from whom and by whose power his maintenance is to be procured, for persons of real judgment are too few in number, and too slow in their influence to be of essential service.

"The following anecdote will serve to illustrate what is now advanced.

"Soon after Sir Joshua Reynolds set out in his

career in London, he set up a most superb [1] carriage—a chariot—on the panels of which were curiously painted the four seasons of the year, in allegorical figures; the wheels were ornamented with carved foliage and gilding; the liveries also of the servants were laced with silver; but having no spare time himself to make a display of this splendour, he insisted on it that his sister Frances, who then lived with him, should go out with it as much as possible and let it be seen in the public streets to make a show, which she was much averse to, being a person of great shyness of disposition, as it always attracted the gaze of the populace, and made her quite ashamed to be seen in it.

"This anecdote, heard from this very sister's own mouth, serves to show that Sir J. R. knew the use of quackery on the world. He knew that it would be inquired whose grand chariot this was, and that when it was told it would give a strong indication of his great success, and by that means tend to increase it. But the disposition and the fate of Northcote was such that he never was able to strike the public as a wonder of his time. He could draw no attention from them as a prodigy of his years, as the time of life when he began to study the art was such, being at the age of maturity, that

[1] I have been told that it was an old chariot of a Sheriff of London newly done up.—NORTHCOTE.

mature works were to be expected from him. And as to his manners and habits, they were such as were not calculated to win the attention of a gay and careless public. For they were plain and simple, totally void of all quackery to impose by any kind of deceit or vain pretence, nor had he impudence or arrogance to demand notice. His mind was wholly occupied in the intention of doing his work as well as it was in his power to do it, and trusting his fate to that alone, he perhaps too much neglected the common appearances which would have drawn the vain, the wealthy, and the idle on his side; but, scorning to succeed by any arts, he rather wished that justice might prevail, whither by it he might rise or fall.

"That he never was assisted by private patronage may be attributed to the above cause also."

Northcote may now be permitted to relapse into the first person; especially as he proceeds to tell a very characteristic anecdote of his own unwarlike nature.

"One morning—it was on the 6th of October, 1802—I was taking my usual walk from nine to ten o'clock; I was out on Primrose Hill, near Hampstead, when a stout man came across the field and came on in the pathway to meet me. I saw some-

thing much to be suspected in the appearance and manner of this fellow, and then looked round for help, but saw none; as it was on the hill the prospect was extensive, but no mortal was nigh; I might have taken another path to have avoided the man, but yet I thought it would be foolishly timorous to cry out before I was hurt, so kept on to meet this fellow; but when he came abreast of me, with a sudden dart he seized me by the collar, and then told me he would immediately blow my brains out if I did not instantly deliver my money and my watch, which was quickly obeyed. The money amounted to about two guineas and a half, which was not of much importance, but the watch was of great value, being a large double-cased repeater which had been my father's.

"The fellow then walked slowly towards Hampstead, and I continued my usual pace towards home, and never heard more of the robber or of my property.

"My friend, Mr. P. Hoare, who was then at Brighton, saw an account of the affair on the public papers and sent me these lines :—

"'Time's index lost, let others weep;
Vain were for thee its pow'rs;
Since, Northcote, a whole world shall keep
The record of thine hours.

"'P. H.'

"I dined at the Royal Academy great dinner, 1804, and had the satisfaction to sit at table exactly opposite to the famous Admiral Lord Nelson. He was on the first sight what would strike one as rather a mean-looking person, but when you surveyed him with attention you saw in the character and expression of his countenance the strongest marks of intrepidity and heroism in a degree infinitely beyond what is given in any portrait of him now in existence. The portraits of him are all likenesses so as to be known, but insipidly like.

"In the year 1804 I was employed by T. L. Parker, of Brouxholme, to paint the portrait of Master West Betty, the famous young player commonly called the young Roscius, who at that time set all London in an uproar. He was brought to sit the first morning after his arrival in London, and before he had appeared on that stage; every mark of possible respect was paid him by all ranks of people—indeed, as if he had been a prince of the Blood Royal. One morning, when he came to sit, he was attended by his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, who seemed proud in being a patron of so great a genius. But the whole time of the sitting the Duke amused himself by making a thousand vulgar jokes on the painter, on his room, the furniture, on his person also, and on the whole Royal Academy. This at last much displeased the

MASTER BETTY.

painter, and after the young Roscius and his mother, who accompanied him, were gone, and the Duke and I left alone, I talked seriously to him to let him know how improperly he had behaved himself, at the same time carefully avoiding the giving him any kind of title, saying, 'You said so, and you did this,' when the Duke looked rather shagreened, and when he went away he was left to find his way out of the house without any attention being paid him.

"But when the Duke came down into the hall at the bottom of the stairs he found that it rained hard, and desired to have an umbrella lent him, which was accordingly granted. Afterwards, when I came down at my dinner hour and was informed that the Duke had borrowed the umbrella, I said, 'Then we shall never see that or the Duke again, because I think I have affronted him for his disagreeable behaviour to me.' However, I was much mistaken, for the Duke came the next morning with the ragged umbrella under his arm, although the sun shone, and the Duke, when he came into the room, with much mildness made an apology, saying he did not mean to offend by anything he had said the preceding day, and that he did it merely to make the young Roscius look cheerful. This was perfectly satisfactory to me, and the Duke sat down and entered into familiar and very sensible conversation

for more than two hours, and showed great knowledge of the world and the most polite manners. During this time we remained uninterrupted, as young Betty did not come to sit as he had intended, being prevented by a slight cold. Doctor Pearson, who had promised to bring him in his carriage, thought it improper for him to venture coming out that morning."

The same story is told with rather more detail by Alan Cunningham.

"At the time when the young Roscius passed for a Garrick and a Kemble in one, and nightly witnessed 'the slope of wet faces from the pit to the roof,' he sat to our painter. That no honour might be wanting he was conveyed by the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.) to Argyll Place in his own carriage, where lords and ladies not a few usually assembled to see the progress of the work. The painter himself was probably to his Royal Highness not the least object of curiosity. 'The loose gown,' says one of his biographers, 'in which he painted was principally composed of shreds and patches, and might perchance be half a century old; his white hair was sparingly bestowed on each side, and his cranium was entirely bald.' The royal visitor, standing behind him whilst he painted, first gently lifted, or rather twitched, the collar of the gown; which Northcote resented by suddenly

turning and expressing his displeasure by a frown; on which his Royal Highness, touching the professor's grey locks, said, 'You don't devote much time to the toilette, I perceive.' The painter instantly replied, 'Sir, I never allow any one to take personal liberties with me; you are the first who ever presumed to do so; and I beg your Royal Highness to recollect that I am in my own house.' The artist resumed his painting; the prince stood silent for a minute or so, then opened the door and went away. The royal carriage, however, had not arrived, and rain was falling; the prince returned, borrowed an umbrella, and departed. 'Dear Mr. Northcote,' said one of the ladies, 'I fear you have offended his Royal Highness.' 'Madam,' said the painter, 'I am the offended party.' The next day about noon Mr. Northcote was alone when a gentle tap was heard, the studio door opened and in walked the prince. 'Mr. Northcote,' he said, 'I am come to return your sister's umbrella; I brought it myself that I might have an opportunity of saying that yesterday I thoughtlessly took an unbecoming liberty with you, which you properly resented. I really am angry with myself, and hope you will forgive me and think no more of it.' 'And what did you say?' inquired a friend to whom the painter told the story. 'Say—Good God! what could I say? I

only bowed—he might see what I felt. I could at that moment have sacrificed my life for him ; such a prince is worthy to be a king.' The prince afterwards in his maritime way said, 'He's a damned honest, independent, little old fellow!'".

"In respect to the young Roscius," says Northcote, "so great was the curiosity of the public to see him at that time, that a lady of quality desired that, if she could not be permitted to be in the room when he sat for his picture, she might be suffered to stand on the stairs to see him as he passed. His dressing-room at the theatre was crowded as full as it could contain of all the Court of England, and happy were those who could get in at the time his father was rubbing down his naked body from the perspiration after the exertion in performing his part on the stage. And it was observed that a greater mob assembled in the street to see him when he came on the evenings to the theatre to perform than were assembled there to see the King and Queen. When he went to see the Tower of London he was received with all the respect that is paid to any of the Royal Family. This I saw who, with Mr. T. L. Parker accompanied him, together with Sir George and Lady Beaumont, in their carriage. Everything was shown to this wonderful youth with the utmost promptitude and convenience,

and cannon were proved before him for his satisfaction. And it must be confessed that his behaviour was remarkably simple, modest, and unassuming, and without the least of conceit or affectation."

William Henry West Betty was born in 1791, of Irish parentage. At the age of ten he was taken to see a play, and declared he would die or be an actor. In 1803 he made his *début* at Belfast as Osman in "Zara" (the English version of Voltaire's "Zaïre"). His first appearance in London was at Covent Garden in 1804; the military had to be called in to restrain the crush. He appeared for the last time as a boy in 1808; returned to the stage in 1812, but retired at the age of thirty-three to live quietly on the large fortune he had earned before he was seventeen; and only died so recently as 1874.

There is another allusion to this "comet of a season" in the "Conversations."

"Northcote then spoke of the boy, as he always calls him (Master Betty). He asked if I had ever seen him act, and I said 'Yes,' and was one of his admirers. He answered, 'Oh! yes, it was such a beautiful effusion of natural sensibility; and then that graceful play of the limbs in youth gave such an advantage over every one about him.' Humphreys (the artist) said 'he had never seen the

little Apollo off the pedestal before. You see the same thing in the boys at Westminster School. But none was equal to him.' Mr. Northcote alluded with pleasure to his unaffected manners when a boy, and mentioned, as an instance of his simplicity, his saying one day, 'If they admire me so much, what would they say to Mr. Harley?' (a tragedian in the same strolling company with himself.)

"We then spoke of his acting since he was grown up. Northcote said he went to see him one night with Fuseli in 'Alexander the Great,' and that he observed coming out they could get no one to do it better. 'Nor so well,' said Fuseli. A question being put, Why, then, could he not succeed at present? 'Because,' said Northcote, 'the world will never admire twice. The first surprise was excited by his being a boy, and when that was over nothing could bring them back again to the same point, not though he had turned out a second Roscius.'"

Northcote's portrait of him is now at Petworth House, Sussex.

Concerning the Duke of Clarence there is another incidental mention in the memoir. A letter of Samuel Northcote's from Plymouth, dated March 12, 1786, says :—

"The Prince is come to this part again, and one

night, after running about with some buckish officers, he got into the garrison in the dead of the night and serenaded the Governor with a band of music under his window, to the great astonishment and mortification of the Governor."

Northcote was at one time favourably considered at the Prince Regent's Court, where some of his utterances on politics had been quoted. "I myself might have been a courtier," he said to Hazlitt, "if I could have cringed and held my tongue, but I could no more exist in that element than a fish out of water. Sir Joshua once asked me, 'What do you know of the Prince of Wales that he so often speaks to me about you?' I remember I made him laugh by my answer, for I said, 'Oh, he knows nothing of me, nor I of him—it's only his *bragging!*' 'Well,' said he, 'that is spoken like a king!'"

"In June, 1804, I painted a very good portrait of Sir Edward Pellew, who was made a baronet from his having performed one of the most gallant of actions in being the chief instrument in saving the crew of the *Dutton* East Indiaman when a wreck on the rocks under the citadel at Plymouth; and as the whole event is excellently described in a letter written at the time by my elder brother, who was an eye-witness of the distress, I shall without any

more apology give it verbatim. Sir Edward for this action had also an augmentation to his arms and crest. The wreck makes also the background of the portrait, but Sir Edward would never suffer a print to be taken from the picture.

"PLYMOUTH, *January* 28, 1796.

"We have had a terrible succession of stormy weather alate. Tuesday, immediately after dinner, I went to the Hoe to see the *Dutton* East Indiaman, full of troops, upon the rocks directly under the flagstaff of the citadel. She had been out seven weeks on her passage to the West Indies, as a transport with four hundred troops on board, besides women and the ship's crew, and had been just driven back by the stress of weather, with a great number of sick on board. You cannot conceive anything so horrible as the appearance of things altogether which I beheld when I first arrived on the spot. The ship was struck on sunken rocks somewhat inclining to one side, and without a mast or the boltsprit standing, and her decks were covered with the soldiers as thick as they could possibly stand by one another, with the sea breaking in a most horrible manner all around them; and what still added to the melancholy grandeur of this scene was the distress-guns which were fired now and then, directly over our heads, from the citadel. When I first came to

the spot I found that they had by some means got a rope, with one end on't fixt to the ship and the other was held by the people on shore, by which means they could yield as the ship swang. Upon this rope they had got a ring, which they could by means of two smaller ropes draw forth and back from the ship to the shore; to this ring they had fixt a loop which each man put under his arms, and by this means and holding by the ring with his hands he supported himself, hanging to the ring while he was drawn to the shore by the people there, and in this manner I saw a great many drawn on shore. But this proved a tedious work, and though I looked at them for a long time, yet the numbers on the deck were not apparently diminishing; besides, from the motion which the ship had by rolling on the rocks it was not possible to keep the rope equally strech'd; and from this cause, as well as from the sudden rising of the waves, you would at one moment see a poor wretch hanging ten or twenty feet above the water, and the next you would lose sight of him in the foam of a wave, though some escaped better.

"But this was not a scheme which the women and many of the sick could avail themselves of.

"I observed with some admiration the behaviour of a captain of a man-of-war, who seemed interested in the highest degree for the safety of those poor wretches. He exerted himself uncommonly and

directed others what to do on the shore, and endeavoured in vain, with a large speaking-trumpet, to make himself heard by those on board; but, finding that nothing could be heard but the roaring of the wind and sea, he offered anybody five guineas instantly who would suffer himself to be drawn on board with instructions to them what to do. And when he found that nobody would accept his offer, he gave an instance of the highest heroism, for he fixed the rope about himself and gave the signal to be drawn on board.

"He had his uniform coat and his sword hanging at his side. I have not room to describe the particulars, for there was something grand and interesting in the thing; for as soon as they had pulled him into the wreck he was received with three vast shouts by the people on board, and these were immediately echoed by those who lined the shores, the garrison walls, and lower batteries. The first thing he did was to rig out two other ropes like the first, which I saw him most active in doing with his own hands, which quickened the matter a good deal, and by this time two large open row-boats were arrived from the Dockyard, and a sloop with difficulty worked out from Plymouth pool. He then became active in getting out the women and the sick, who were with difficulty got into the open boats and by them carried off to the

sloop, which kept off for fear of being stove against the ship or thrown upon the rocks. He suffered but one boat to approach the ship at a time, and stood with his drawn sword to prevent too many rushing into the boat. After he had seen all the people out of the ship to about ten or fifteen, he fixed himself in the rope as before and was drawn ashore, where he was again received with shouts. Upon my inquiry who this gallant hero was, I was informed that it was Sir Edward Pellew, who I had heard the highest character of before both for bravery and mercy.

"The soldiers were falling into disorder, for when Sir Edward went on board there was no officer amongst them. I suppose they were some of the first who took care of themselves when the rope was first fixed. Many of the soldiers were very drunk, having broke into the cabin and got at the liquor. I saw him beating one with the flat of his broadsword in order to make him give up a bundle he had made up of plunder. They had but just time to save the men before the ship was nearly under water.

"I observed a poor goat and a dog amongst the crowd. When the people were somewhat thinned away, I saw the goat marching about with much unconcern, but the dog showed evident anxiety, for I saw him stretching himself out at one of the

ports, standing partly upon the port and partly upon a gun, and looking earnestly towards the shore, where I suppose he knew his master was. All those perished soon after, as the ship was washed all over as the sea rose. She is now in pieces."

This letter was shown to Hazlitt, who has printed it in the "Conversations."

"I may here add another act of bravery and heroic conduct of this truly great man, which he related to me at the time he was sitting to me for his portrait. It happened at the time when he was off at sea and could receive no help from any power but from his own courage. He was then the commander of a man-of-war. He was informed by one of his crew that a secret plot was formed to seize the ship and to murder all the officers and make a prize of the vessel and become pirates. At last information was given him that the moment was now arrived and that the ringleaders were in full council at that time in the cockpit, and not a moment to be lost. This was at midnight, when he armed himself with a loaded pistol in each hand and descended boldly down to this awful assembly, and entering he swore that the first man who offered to make any resistance he would immediately shoot dead. When instantly the courage of those wretches forsook them and they all quietly gave themselves up prisoners to this one intrepid hero.

"Wonderful is the cowardice of vice, for had those plotters at that moment seized this brave man their plot would have been completed."

"In the year 1806 died James Barry the painter, the only man I had ever heard Sir Joshua Reynolds speak of with any bitterness, and of him he said, 'That man I think I may say I hate, though it is a bad thing to say that of any man.' It is therefore a curious circumstance to know that this very James Barry and Sir Joshua Reynolds are buried side by side in the Cathedral of St. Paul. It is indeed of small importance who lies nearest to us in the grave.

"In the year 1820 I painted the subject of a very humane action of Alexander, Emperor of Russia, which is thus related of him.

"The Emperor, in one of his journeys through Poland, being considerably in advance of his attendants, saw several persons assembled on the banks of the little river Wilia, and approaching the spot found that they had just dragged out of the water a peasant who appeared to be lifeless. He instantly alighted, had the man laid on the side of the bank, and immediately proceeded to strip him and to rub his temples, wrists, &c. The Emperor was thus employed when his suite joined

him, whose exertions were immediately added to those of the Emperor. Dr. Wylly, his Majesty's physician, attempted to bleed the patient, but in vain; and after three hours' fruitless attempt to recover him the doctor declared that it was useless to proceed any further. The Emperor, much chagrined and fatigued with continued exertions, entreated Dr. Wylly to persevere, and to make a fresh attempt to bleed him. The doctor, though he had not the slightest hope of being successful, proceeded to obey the positive injunctions of his Imperial Majesty, who, with Prince Wolkousky and Count Lieven (now ambassador at the British Court), made a last effort at rubbing, &c. At length the Emperor had the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing the blood make its appearance, while the poor peasant uttered a feeble groan. The emotions of his Imperial Majesty at this moment could not be described; and, in the plenitude of his joy, he exclaimed, 'Good God! this is the brightest day of my life!' while tears involuntarily rolled down his cheek. Their exertions were now redoubled; the Emperor tore his handkerchief and bound the arm of the patient, nor did he leave him until he was quite recovered. He then had him conveyed to a place where proper care could be taken of him, ordered a considerable present, and afterwards provided for him and his family.

"As to my works, they are scattered about in various private collections, except a large one whose subject is the death of Wat Tyler, painted for Alderman Boydell and given by him to the City of London, and placed in the council room at Guildhall. This is one of my best pictures. Another large picture, the subject being Shakespere's description of the entry into London of Richard the Second and Bolingbroke, is in the Hall of the Armourers Company."

Concerning the Wat Tyler picture Northcote has a detached note.

"On Sunday, November 26, 1815, Canova, the famous Italian sculptor, paid me a visit, totally unexpected, as I had never seen him, neither did I know any one who would have brought him to me. He then told me that he had come from having seen the picture painted by me of the death of Wat Tyler, which he thought extraordinary fine, and therefore expressed an earnest wish to be introduced to the author of it. That Canova saw this picture of the death of Wat Tyler was by accident, as he was taken to the place by Chantry only to see his statue of the late King, which is placed at the head of a room. When Canova came to me he was conducted by Pellegrini, the Venetian

painter. Haydon also accompanied them, who closely attached himself to Canova wherever he could."

Domenico Pellegrini was born in Venice, and came to England in 1792, where he acquired considerable repute as a portrait painter. He ultimately returned to his own country.

Northcote died on July 13, 1831, in his eighty-fifth year. He left £1,000 to be paid to Chantry for a monument to himself (which stands in the church of St. Marylebone), and £200 for a similar memorial to his brother Samuel.

APPENDIX

LIST OF NORTHCOTE'S PAINTINGS[1]

PORTRAITS PAINTED AT PORTSMOUTH IN THE YEAR 1776.

1. John Hunt and Anthony Hunt (in one picture).
2. Edward Hunt.
3. Miss Fitzherbert.
4. Miss Jane Fitzherbert.
5. Mr. Fitzherbert.
6. Master Eyres.
7. Miss Eyres.
8. Miss Prosser and Miss L. Prosser (in one picture).
9. Mrs. Prosser.
10. Master Josh Hunt.
11. Mrs. Hunt.
12. Mr. Parlby.
13. Ditto.
14. Mrs. Parlby.
15. Mr. W. Templar.
16. Ditto.
17. James Ferguson (the print by Hayward).
18. Miss Moore.
19. Lord Holmes.
20. Lady Holmes.
21. Lady Christian (small).
22. Captain Inglefield.

[1] Northcote is responsible for the spelling of names.—S.G.

23. Captain C. Hamilton.
24. Ditto.
25. Captain Chic. Fortescue.
26. Captain Piere Williams.
27. Miss Williams.
28. Mr. Hawker, Organist at Portsmouth.
29. Rev. Mr. Ramsay.

Portraits Painted at Plymouth in the Year 1776.

30. Mrs. Barth, Dunsterville.
31. Miss Mary Brent.
32. Master John Squire and his Brother (in one picture).
33. Miss Squire.
34. Mrs. Gandy.
35. Mrs. Collins.
36. Mr. Wills.
37. Mr. Wm. Fillis.
38. Mrs. Northcote, of Honiton.
39. Mr. Northcote, of Honiton.
40. Mrs. A. Saunders.
41. Mrs. Yonge.
42. Rev. Mr. Gandy.
43. Mrs. Coryton.
44. Miss Gandy.
45. Mr. Omany.
46. Mr. G. Leach.
47. Rev. James Yonge.
48. Miss Crawley.
49. Mrs. Yonge, of Puslinch.
50. Mr. Charles Yonge.
51. Miss Harrison (half-length).
52. Miss MacBride (half-length).
53. Mrs. Rogers, afterwards Lady Rogers.
54. Admiral MacBride (half-length—a print from this by Fitler).
55. Admiral Vinson.
56. Mrs. Mudge.

57. Mrs. Dunsterville.
58. Sir Frederick Rogers.
59. Lady Rogers.
60. Miss Yonge, afterwards Mrs. Morshead.
61. A White Greyhound (for the Rev. J. Yonge).
62. Mrs. C. Harris.
63. Miss Harris.
64. Mr. C. Harris.
65. Mrs. Chaillé.
66. Mrs. J. Harris.
67. Miss A. Harris.
68. Mr. John Harris.
69. Mrs. Squire.
70. Captain Lane.
71. Mrs. Lane.

Portraits Painted in Plymouth in the Year 1780.

72. Mrs. Leach.
73. Mr. Henry Tolcher.
74. Mr. Putt.
75. Miss Mudge, afterwards Mrs. Yonge.
76. Mr. Tom Putt.
77. Lady Elford and her Son (in one picture).
78. Sir William Elford (half-length).
79. Dr. Geach.
80. Mr. Crawley.
81. Rev. L. Elford.
82. Mr. Dodge.
83. J. Northcote (for Mr. Dodge).
84. Mrs. Shepherd.
85. Miss Ann Shepherd.
86. Master Saville Shepherd.
87. Mr. Tom Shepherd.

Portraits Painted in 1781.

88. Mr. Shepherd.
89. Mr. Luxmore.

90. Mr. Edward Stevens Trelawney.
91. Mrs. Wills.
92. Rev. Mr. Crossman.
93. Rev. Mr. Ferneaux.
94. Captain Ferneaux.
95. Rev. Duke Yonge.
96. Mr. Thomas.
97. Mr. Morshead.
98. Lieutenant Mason, of Okehampton.
99. Rev. Mr. Hughes.
100. Rev. Mr. Worth.
101. Rev. Mr. Hawkin.
102. Mrs. Hughes.
103. Miss Sally Lewis.
104. Miss Maria Lewis, afterwards Mrs. Manley.
105. Mrs. Jonathan Elford.
106. Mr. Culme.
107. Colonel Dyer of the Marines.
108. Mrs. Culme.
109. Admiral Hide Parker.
110. Mr. Ferneaux.
111. Master Parker, afterwards Lord Borindon.
112. Miss Vincent.
113. Mr. Paul Onrey Treby.
114. Mrs. Arscott, of Tetcott.
115. Sir Thomas Page.

PAINTED IN LONDON, IN BOND STREET.

116. Sir Frederick Rogers.
117. Lord Radstock.
118. Lord Hugh Seymour.
119. Captain John Manlay (half-length).
120. Mr. T. Brett, Commissioner.
121. Mr. Marsh, Commissioner (half-length).
122. Sir Thomas Page (half-length).
123. Mrs. Colingwood.

124. Sir Andrew Snape Hammond.
125. Lady Dowager Poulett.
126. Sir Richard Pearson (half-length).
127. Mrs. Bell.
128. Mr. Mervyn (a copy from Sir Joshua Reynolds).
129. Ditto ditto.
130. Captain Ferneaux (a copy).
131. Mr. John Bastard and his Brother (in one picture, from which there is a print by Reynolds).
132. Mr. Tom Brent.
133. Lord Radstock.

PORTRAITS PAINTED IN LONDON IN 1782.

134. Lord Radstock (third picture).
135. Master John MacBride and his Sister (in one picture).
136. Prince William of Gloucester.
137. General Arnold.
138. Mr. Thos. Mudge, jun. (for Mr. Rosden).
139. Mr. Honeywood—1.
140. Ditto 2.
141. Ditto. 3.
142. Mr. Bayley, of Plymouth.
143. Mrs. Bayley.
144. Master Harry Bayley.
145. Mrs. Frederick.
146. Miss Sarah Foster.
147. Mrs. Honeywood.
148. Mr. Hawkins.
149. Mrs. Honeywood (a copy).
150. Mrs. Russell, of Basingstoke.
151 Ditto ditto.

PICTURES PAINTED IN THE YEAR 1783.

152. The Village Doctress (the print by Walker; also a small print).
153 The Dancing Dogs.

154. The Spell (from Gay's poems—the print by Walker).
155. Mr. Fitzherbert.
156. Mrs. Shergold.
157. Mr. Fisher.
158. Major Fairfax.
159. Mr. Strachey.
160. Mrs. A. Smith and her Daughter (in one picture, from which there is a print by Kingsbury).
161. Captain Fitzherbert.
162. Rev. Mr. Fitzherbert.
163. Lord Hood (half-length—print by Kingsbury).
164. Sir Hugh Christian.
165. Mr. Simson.
166. Mr. Lamp (Kit Cat).
167. Lord Hood (print by Fisinger).
168. Captain Chichester Fortescue.
169. Captain Sherley.
170. Mr. Lance (half-length).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1784.

171. Captain Allen.
172. Mr. Uppleby.
173. Mr. Lane.
174. Sir Charles Frederick.
175. Captain Spry Davy.
176. Master John Rayner.
177. Master John Millbank (Kit Cat).
178. Mrs. Millbank (half-length).
179. Mr. Arscott, of Tetcott.
180. Lady Mansfield (a copy).

Raised the Price from Eight Guineas to Ten for a Head.

181. Lord Bridport.
182. Mr. Molesworth.
183. Sir Ralph Millbank (half-length).
184. Mrs. Molesworth and Child.

185. Beggar Boy and Monkey, &c. (a print from this by Ward).
186. Stern and Maria (small—the print by Parker).
187. The Fruit Girl (half-length—the print by Gaugain).
188. The Visit to the Grandmother (the print by J. R. Smith).
189. Connubial Happiness.
190. Last Interview of Charlotte and Werter (the print by Parker).
191. Charlotte and Werter (by moonlight; small—the print by Parker).
192. Stern in the Glove Shop (small—the print by Parker).
193. S. Northcote (for Elford).
194. S. Northcote (for Leach—the print by Reynolds).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1785.

195. Sir William Molesworth (for Mr. Bastard).
196. Lord Ancram.
197. Earl Harcourt.
198. Jonas Hanaway (for Sir William Molesworth—half-length).
199. From Marmontel (a small picture—the print by Gaugain).
200. From Ditto (its companion Ditto).
201. Captain Inglefield with Eleven Men saved at Sea (the print by Gaugain).
202. Lord Hood (print by Ridley).
203. Altered a picture of his Family (for Sir H. Bridgman).
204. Copy of General Johnson (for Lady Bourgoine).
205. Death of Prince Leopold of Brunswick (print by Gaugain).
206. Mrs. Fane (half-length).
207. Sir William Molesworth (for Elford).
208. Edward V. and His Brother Murdered (print by Legate—Boydell's Shakespere).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1786.

209. Loss of the *Halswell* East Indiaman (print by Gildrey).
210. The Milk Girl (small—print by Gaugain).
211. Sir John Henslow.

212. Lady Henslow.
213. Subject from Haley's Poems (print by Parker).
214. Ditto (its companion—print by Parker).
215. Meeting of Edward V. and His Brother (the print by Reynolds).
216. Mrs. Graves.
217. Mrs. Frederick.
218. Sir Corbett Corbett.
219. Rev. H. Whitfield.
220. Sir Stafford Northcote (half-length).
221. Captain Frederick.
222. The Death of Wat Tyler (for Boydell—print by Anchor Smith).
223. Mr. Samuel Northcote, Senr. (print by Reynolds).
224. Rev. Mr. Chatfield.
225. The Bill of Rights (for Mr. Harris—print by Parker).
226. Doctor John Mudge (for Rev. J. Yonge—print by Reynolds).
227. Lord Radstock.
228. Lady Caroline Waldegrave.
229. Lord Radstock (copy).
230. Lady Radstock and Child.
231. Lady Radstock and Child (copy).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1787.

232. Mrs. Thornhill.
233. Elijah raises the Widow's Son (print by Murphy).
234. Jael and Sisera in the Royal Academy (print by Murphy).
235. Large picture of the Meeting of Edward V. and his Brother (for Boydell's Shakespere—print by Thew).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1788.

236. Mrs. Whitfield.
237. The Flower Girl (half-length).
238. Lord Hinton (Kit Cat).
239. Mr. Forbes.

240. Hon. Mr. Bouvere.
241. Lady Bridget Bouvere.

Price Raised to Fifteen Guineas a Head.

242. The Tigress (for Boydell—print by Murphy).
243. Last Scene in the Third Part of Shakespere's "Henry VI." (for Boydell—print by Michell).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1789.

244. Hubert and Arthur (Shakespere for Boydell—print by Thew).
245. Earl of Radnor (copy from Gainsborough).
246. Sir George Osborne.
247. Lady Hennage Osborne.
248. Miss Dolignon.
249. Death of the Young Earl of Rutland (Shakespere for Boydell—print by Ryder).
250. Mrs. Mac. Connor.
251. Mr. Mac. Connor.
252. Mrs. King.
253. Destruction of the Bastille (print by Gildrey).
254. Last Scene in "Romeo and Juliet" (Shakespere for Boydell—print by Simon).
255. S. Northcote with a Hawk (for the Duke of Dorset).
256. The Landing of King William III. (print by Parker).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1790.

257. Mrs. Mason.
258. Dowager Countess of Morton.
259. Mr. Cotton.
260. Captain Mason.
261. Mrs. Gordon (a copy).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1791.

262. Death of Mortimer in Prison (Shakespere for Boydell—print by Thew).

263. Dr. Finch (half-length).
264. Mrs. Barnard.
265. Mrs. Moreland.
266. Mr. Moreland.
267. The Burial of the Two Princes in the Tower (Shakespere for Boydell—print by Skelton).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1792.

268. Lady Jane Grey in Prison, &c. (print by Bromley).
269. Miss Putt.
270. Mr. Banks (sculptor).
271. Mrs. Banks.
272. Miss Banks.
273. Lioness and Whelps (for Boydell—print by Earlom).
274. "Timon of Athens" (Shakespere for Woodmason).
275. The Two Sons of Sultan Tippo Saib (print by Gildrey).
276. Mr. Saxton, Commissioner (half-length—print by Reynolds).
277. Orlando and Oliver (Shakespere for Woodmason—print by Rodes).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1793.

278. The Fables of the Lion in Love.
279. Death of John of Gaunt (Shakespere for Woodmason).
280. Public Entry of King Richard and Bolingbroke into London (Shakespere for Boydell—print by Thew).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1794.

Ten Kit Cat Pictures, being a set containing the Progress of an Industrious and an Idle Girl (prints by Gaugain).

Price Raised to Twenty Guineas a Head.

291. Rev. Cory Luxmore.
292. Admiral Lord Graves (half-length—print by Bartolozzi).

PICTURES PAINTED IN THE YEAR 1795.

293. Miss Eliza Forbes (half-length).
294. Mr. Maclaure.
295. Miss Steeley (half-length—print by Reynolds).
296. Mr. Combe.
297. Balaam and the Angel (for Maclin's Bible—print by Fitler).
298. Mr. Staley (half-length).
299. Mrs. Staley (half-length).
300. Master Woodmason.
301. Sir Francis Bourgeois (print by Reynolds).

PICTURES PAINTED IN THE YEAR 1796.

302. Count Bruhl (half-length—print by Reynolds).
303. Hon. George Powlett (half-length).
304. Master Semon (half-length).
305. Mr. Desanfans.
306. Girl at Prayer (print by Reynolds).
307. Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph (for Miss Linwood).

PICTURES PAINTED IN THE YEAR 1797.

308. Hermit in Contemplation.
309. Two Leopards (print by Reynolds).
310. The Marquis De Le Fazelli, &c., in the Prison (print by Reynolds).
311. Dr. Remmett.
312. Captain A. Hunt (print by Reynolds).
313. Mrs. Hawkins Whitshed, and Child (half-length).
314. Captain Bentinck.
315. Miss Bentinck.
316. Dog and Hawk (for Mr. P. Powlett).
317. Two Monkeys (print by Reynolds).
318. Miss Bayley (half-length—print by Reynolds).
319. Inside of Goring Church.
320. Lioness and Whelps (print by Reynolds).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1798.

321. Mrs. Huntley (half-length).
322. Mr. Cranstown.
323. Mr. Jonathan Elford.
324. Death of Captain Hood (print by Reynolds).
325. Edward V. and his Brother Murdered in the Tower.
326. Mr. Jacob Salvadore.
327. Inside of Goring Church (for Miss Linwood).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1799.

328. Meeting of Edward V. and his Brother.
329. Captain Durham (half-length—print by Reynolds).
330. Admiral Sir Charles Poole (half-length).
331. Vulture and Snake (print by Reynolds).
332. Lion (small).
333. Sir John Leicester (print by Reynolds).
334. Vulture and Lamb (print by Reynolds).
335. Tiger and Crocodile (print by Turner).
336. Eagle, Fox, and Pheasant (print by Murphy).
337. Lion and Snake (print by Reynolds).
338. Mr. Hawkens Whitshed.
339. Admiral Hawkens Whitshed (half-length—print by Reynolds).
340. A Spaniel Dog for Mr. Linwood (print by Reynolds).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1800.

341. The Cradle Hymn (print by Facius).
342. Vulture in a Storm.
343. Counsellor Graves (half-length.)
344. Mr. Parker.
345. Miss St. Clair with a Hawk.
346. Girl in a Shop of Animals.
347. Earl of Rosslyn (print by Bartolozzi).
348. Girl going to Market with an Ass.
349. Colonel Brown and the Pope, &c
350. Two Miss Elfords.

351. Miss St. Clare as Meranda (whole-length).
352. Mirza Aboo Taleb Khan.
353. Lord Radstock (print by Ridley).
354. Bonaparte on a White Horse (print by Reynolds).

PICTURES PAINTED IN THE YEAR 1801.

355. Sir Thomas Graves (half-length — two prints, one by Reynolds, one by Ridley).
356. Rev. Mr. Bayley (half-length).
357. Mr. Parker (half-length).
358. Miss St. Clare as a Bacchante.
359. Miss St. Clare, the Dumb Alphabet (print by Annis).
360. Miss St. Clare (whole length on a mule—print by William Ward).
361. Miss Brown (print by Kingsbury).
362. Death of Abercrombie (large print by Michell).
363. Miss Cotton (print by Annis).
364. Miss St. Clare with a Hawk (head size).

PICTURES PAINTED IN THE YEAR 1802.

365. Mr. King.
366. Mr. Rogers, jun. (half-length).
367. Mr. F. Bayley.
368. Mr. Ralph Leycester (half-length).
369. Mr. Ashton and Mr. Hoste in one picture (print by Dawe).
370. Speaker of the House of Commons (half-length—print by Picart).
371. Doctor Ford.
372. James Northcote (for Sir J. Leicester).
373. Dr. Jenner (Kit Cat—print by Say).
374. Mr. Henchman (print by Reynolds).
375. Mr. Rogers, jun. (print by Miss Green).
376. Christ the Good Shepherd (half-length—print by Reynolds).
377. Christ the Good Shepherd.
378. Mr. Godwin (print by Dawe).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1803.

379. Mr. Inigo Jones (half-length).
380. Subject from the "*Tatler*."
381. Captain S. Brooking (print by Ridley).
382. Captain S. Brooking.
383. Mr. R. Brent.
384. Mr. Cotterill (Kit Cat).
385. Mr. C. Leycester (half-length—print by Reynolds).
386. Miss St. Clare (whole-length, with a hawk).
387. Mrs. Smith.
388. Mrs. Rogers, sen. (half-length).
389. Mr. Parker.
390. Mr. Parker (half-length).
391. Mr. Brooke (half-length).
392. Mr. Harry Leicester (half-length).
393. Mr. Roundell (half-length).
394. Mr. Brooke.
395. Mr. Barton (a copy).
396. Speaker of the House of Commons, Abbott.
397. Mr. Nathanson.
398. Village Doctress (print by Reynolds).
399. Market Girl and Ass.
400. James Northcote (print by Reynolds).
401. James Northcote (for Mr. Hoare).
402. James Northcote (for Elford).
403. James Northcote (for Mr. Parker—print by Dawe).
404. Two Miss Willans (in one picture, half-lengths).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1804.

405. Tiger Hunt (for T. L. Parker).
406. Mr. Hatsell (full-length).
407. Mr. Gardener (Kit Cat).
408. Coleridge the Poet.
409. Master Howard of Corbey and his Sister.
410. Honourable Augustus Phipps.
411. Mr. Parker (for Mr. Townley).

412. Miss Smith, of Gloucester.
413. Sir Edward Pellew, Bart.
414. Portrait of a Dog (for Mr. Parker).
415. Mr. Saville Shepherd (half-length).
416. Mrs. Mason (a copy).
417. Colonel William Mudge.
418. Master William Henry West Betty (whole-length).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1805.

419. A little Dog for Mrs. Boyer.
420. Mr. Currer Roundell.
421. Sir Boucher Wray (half-length).
422. Lady Wray (half-length).
423. Admiral Mason (a copy).
424. Lady Carson (small—whole length).
425. Miss Leicester (a child).
426. Miss Clark, Granddaughter of Langmead.
427. Miss Langmead.
428. Edward V. and his Brother Murdered.
429. Sir Philip Moneaux, Bart. (half-length).
430. A Dog of Master Betty's.
431. A Head of Master Betty as Douglas.
432. Daniel in the Lions' Den (Earl Grey).
433. Colonel Gardener (a copy from Stuart).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1806.

434. Buck-hunting in Bolland Forest.
435. Sir James Gardener, Bart. (half-length).
436. Mr. Plowdens Playing at Chess.
437. Mr. Edward Parker (large half-length).
438. Mr. Coldthurst (half-length).
439. Mrs. Coldthurst (half-length).
440. Mr. Rogers's Grandfather.
441. A Water Spaniel for Sir T. Leicester.
442. Girl Leading an Ass.
443. King George III. on Horseback.

444. Vulture and Snake.
445. Mr. Henry Roundell (half-length).
446. The Marriage of James IV. of Scotland with Margaret of England.
447. Captain Morgan (half-length).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1807.

448. R. Rickards (a head).
449. Lady Knighton and Child.
450. Mr. William Harding, of Baraset.
451. Mr. R. Rickards (a copy).
452. Miss Pollinger (half-length).
453. Rev. Mr. Blackall (for Mr. Rogers).
454. James Northcote (given to Lady Northcote).
455. Dr. Walshman (a head).
456. Dr. Walshman again.
457. Romulus and Remus.

Pictures Painted in the Year 1808.

458. Mr. Moses Hawker.
459. Sir George Howard (a copy).
460. The Angels appearing to the Shepherds.
461. Goring Church.
462. Rev. Mr. Thomasin.
463. Mr. Thompson, Governor of Sierra Leone.
464. Rev. Charles Simeon.
465. Earl Cowper.
466. The Bishop of Salisbury.
467. Sir Charles Brisbane (full-length).
468. Mrs. Walshman.
469. A Dog for the Countess of Dysart.
470. A Pointer Dog for S. P. Moneaux.
471. Mrs. Elliott.
472. Sir William Pole (full-length).
473. Mrs. Jones.
474. Mr. Fawcett, of Portland Place.
475. Mrs. Fawcett.
476. Dr. Mudge (a copy for Rosden).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1809.

477. Captain Witingham (dress of Oliver Cromwell).
478. Sir J. Gardiner's Uncle (a copy).
479. Bishop of Carlisle (half-length).
480. Earl Grey (a head).
481. Countess Grey (a head).
482. Mr. Richard Mudge (for Rosden).
483. Hon. Miss Fox.
484. Mr. Calcraft.
485. Captain Newport (full-length).
486. Captain Brown.
487. Lord Kinnard (full-length).
488. Lady Grey (third picture).
489. Pope Pius the Sixth (a head).
490. Lady Elizabeth Whitbread (a head).
491. Samuel Whitbread, Esq.
492. Dowager Countess Grey.
493. Mr. Sangster (for S. Whitbread).
494. Mr. Warrington.
495. Mr. Sangster (for himself).
496. Portrait of Mrs. Bertie.
497. Mrs. Dunsford.
498. Rev. Charles Simeon (second picture).
499. Boy and Tiger's Den.
500. Colonel Colstone.
501. Mrs. Colstone.
502. Death of Argyll.

Pictures Painted in the Year 1810.

503. Mr. Palmer, of Nazing Park.
504. Old Mr. Roundell (half-length).
505. Earl of Jersey (half-length).
506. Earl of Thanet.
507. Captain Cowper (half-length).
508. George Ponsonby, Esq.
509. Mr. Bernales (a Spaniard).
510. Sir Francis Burdett, Bart. (half-length).

511. Mrs. Windham (a head).
512. Lady Charles Bentinck.
513. King George III. in Garter Robes.
514. Earl of Thanet.
515. S. Prado, Esq. (a head).
516. Captain Williams.
517. Lord Charles Bentinck.
518. Colonel Hawker, of Long Parish House.
519. Lady Johnstone, of Hackness (full-length).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1811.

520. Lady Kinneard (full-length).
521. The Duke of Leinster (a head).
522. Dean Parker (for T. L. Parker).
523. Colonel Buckworth (half-length).
524. Lion Hunting (for Mr. Shakerly).
525. The Duke of Leinster.
526. A Door Piece (for Earl Cowper).
527. The Prophet slain by a Lion.
528. Captain Finucane.
529. Rev. Mr. Bailay's Grandmother.
530. Mr. Charles Yonge (from William).
531. The Bishop of Ely (half-length).
532. Mrs. Brent (a head).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1812.

533. King George III. on Horseback.
534. Joseph and His Brethren.
535. Young Mr. Roundell.
536. Daniel in the Lions' Den.
537. Mr. Moseley.
538. Mr. Brunell.
539. Currer, Esq. (a copy from Romney).
540. Second head of Mr. Moseley.
541. J. Northcote, Liverpool.
542. Head of a Philosopher, Liverpool.
543. Sir William Pole, Bart. (a head).

544. Mr. Toddrell (a head).
545. Miss Dalrymple (a head).
546. Bishop of Ely (a copy).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1813.

547. Miss Anna Plumptre.
548. Mr. Charles Short.
549. Lady Pole and Child.
550. Old Mrs. Roundell (a copy).
551. Miss Tippit (a head).
552. Mrs. Radcliff (a head).
553. Christ blessing the Bread.

Pictures Painted in the Year 1814.

554. Mr. Jones (Vestry Clerk).
555. Young Mr. Northmore.
556. Young Mr. Plowden.
557. Mrs. Hawker and Child.
558. R. Leach, Esq. (for Colonel Hawker).
559. Christ in the Garden (full-length).
560. Bishop of Waterford (half-length).
561. Hamilton Hamilton, Esq. (a head).
562. Rev. Mr. Kelly (a head).
563. Master Hawkins Whitshed (half-length).
564. Captain Edward Brace.
565. Miss King (for Mr. Joddrell).
566. The Madonna.
567. Mr. Whitshed Keene.
568. James Northcote.
569. Ditto

Pictures Painted in the Year 1815.

570. Whitshed Keene, Esq.
571. Whitshed Keene, Esq. (third head).
572. Mr. De Leon.
573. Mr. De Leon, jun.
574. Mr. Whitcken (a head).
575. Mr. Salvadore, sen. (a head).

576. Stafford Henry Northcote, Esq.
577. Mr. Ball (related to the Whitsheds).
578. Mr. Whitbread (full-length, Bedford).
579. Young Mr. Z. Mudge.

Pictures Painted in the Year 1816.

580. Mrs. Cathrow (a head).
581. Mr. Cathrow (a head).
582. Mr. Whitbread (full-length, City).
583. Master H. Fellows (a head).
584. Miss Whitshed (a head).
585. Miss Renira Whitshed.
586. Miss Charlotte Whitshed.
587. Rev. Lewis Way (a head).
588. Mr. Whitbread (full length), Scotland.
589. Augustus Hamilton, Esq. (head).
590. The Children and Tigers' Den.
591. Whitshed Keene, Esq. (in a cap).
592. Children and Tigers' Den (second).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1817.

593. Captain Wayland (a head).
594. Mr. Wayland (a head).
595. Sir Robert Peel, Bart. (half-length).
596. Mrs Copeland (a head).
597. Mrs. Boothe (half-length).
598. Count Bentinck (a copy).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1818.

599. Sheriff Alderson (half-length).
600. Prisoner taken at Sedgemoor.
601. Daniel and the Angel in the Lions' Den.
602. John Adare Hawkins, Esq. (half-length).
603. Ditto (a head, for Mrs. Copeland).
604. Bishop of Chichester (half-length).
605. Daniel and the Angel in the Lions' Den.
606. Mr. Septimus Roundell (half-length).

607. Young David Keeping the Flock.
608. Rev. Mr. Parsons (a head).
609. Christ the Good Shepherd.
610. Miss Lydia Hobson.
611. Dr. Blegborough (a head).
612. Mr. Archibald Constable (half-length).
613. S. Prado, Esq. (a head).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1819.

614. Mr. Kean, as Brutus (full length).
615. Mr. Warburton.
616. Sir Charles Wale.
617. General Moore (full length).
618. Master Whitshed (a head).
619. Miss Roberts (Kit Cat).
620. Mrs. Dauncey (a head, copy).
621. Lion Hunting (9 by $7\frac{1}{2}$).
622. Young St John.

Pictures Painted in the Year 1820.

623. A Father Playing on the Flute to his Child.
624. Mr. Snow, the Banker.
625. A Child (for Sir John Miller).
626. Alexander, Emperor of Russia, saves the Man from Drowning.
627. The Marriage of Richard, Duke of York, to Lady Ann Mowbury (bought by Sir William Knighton).
628. Thomas Northmore, Esq.
629. Burial of Edward V. and his Brother in the Tower.
630. A Dog (Lister Parker, Esq.).

1821.

631. Copy of Mr. Rogers, sen.
632. Portrait of Mr. Prado.
633. Master Albert Way.
634. Second picture of the marriage of the Duke of York and Lady Ann Mowbury.
635. Burial of Christ (full-length).

636. Princess Bridget Plantagenet made a Nun.
637. T. C. De Bernales (full-length).
638. Mrs. De Bernales (a head).
639. Miraculous Draught of Fishes.

1822.

640. Sir Edward Baker.
641. Mrs. Albo and her Brother.
642. George Finch Hatton, Esq.
643. A second picture of the Princess Bridget made a Nun.
644. J. J. Ruskin (his child).
645. Sir William Cooper (a head).
646. Mr. Cooper (his son).
647. Young Mr. Ashton (a head).
648. Mrs. Ashton (a head).
649. Burial of Christ (the repetition).
650. Wolf, Dog, and Lambs.
651. Mrs. Northcote and child.
652. Lord Grey (omitted in 1809).
653. Lord Grey, 1809.
654. Lord Grey, 1809.

Pictures Painted in the Year 1823.

My own Portrait with a Hawk.
A second ditto.
My own Portrait (a head).
A second ditto (for Lady Exeter).
Mr. Mudge Compared to the Setting Sun.
Netherton and his Dog.
Mr. Dodge's Story of the Ghost.
Sir Edward Pellew and the Shipwreck.
Comical Letter (Betty Gultet, &c.).
Dick Hunn.
Old Mr. Brooking.
D'Alembert.
Oliver Cromwell.
Dick the Gravedigger.

Dr. Crouch.
Tom Rennel (painter).
Dr. Mudge.
Fuseli and Westall, &c.
Fuseli.
The Old Woman's Sale.
Mrs. Cosway.

Portraits Painted in the Year 1824.

King George IV. (for Mr. Sams—an equestrian portrait).
Ditto (a Kit Cat for Mr. Sams).
Saint Cecilia (half-length—sold at Carlisle).
Portrait of Taddy O'Connallan (half-length—for Sir William Knighton).
The Gallery of the Worthys of Devonshire (bought by Henry Wollcombe, Esq.).
The picture of the Marriage of the young Duke of York with the Lady Ann Mowbury (bought by his Majesty George IV.).
Portrait of His Majesty George IV. on a white horse (sold to the Goldsmith Company).
A repetition of the same picture

Pictures Painted in the Year 1825.

For S. Prado, Esq., made a copy of his brother's portrait — Mr. Salvadore.
For Lady Whitshed (the portrait of her son, a head size).
For Cockburn, Esq. (made a copy of a portrait of Mr. Mawbury—half-length).
Christ falling under the burden of His Cross (sold to Lord Grosvenor for a chapel).
The Princess Bridget Plantagenet a Nun, contemplating on the death of her brothers Edward V. and the Duke of York (half-length).
Portrait of Mrs. Ruskin (a head).
Portrait of John Ruskin, Esq. (a head).

Pictures Painted in the Year 1826.

Portrait of myself sitting in a chair (for Mr. Hillman).
A large picture for an Altar of the Nativity.
Portrait of Miss Hariot Jane Catherine Hawkins Whitshed (a head size).
Portrait of Charles Anthony Ferdinand Bentinck.
Portrait of John William Bentinck (a head).
Portrait of the Honourable Mrs. Cornwall (a head)
Historical picture of Christ's Agony in the Garden (now in the New Church in Regent Street).
Head of a Negro in the character of Othello.

Pictures Painted in the Year 1827.

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